



Career construction and support of D/deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province.

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of a PhD in Disability Studies

By

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**Career construction and support of D/deaf high school learners in
the Eastern Cape Province.**

Declaration

I, Unati Stemela, declare that this thesis, **“Career construction and support for D/deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province”**, is my original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. I further declare that all sources that I have quoted have been acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

Signed by candidate

30 September 2020

PhD candidate: Unati Stemela (STMUNA001)

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my children, Ntinga, Hlumelo and Uthando.

Acknowledgements

I thank God Almighty for everything, especially for the completion of this study.

I thank my parents, especially my mom Nosipho, for their love and support.

Thank you to my husband, Lulama, for partnering with me in this journey.

Thank you very much to my children, Ntinga, Hlumelo and Uthando, for allowing me to take from their time to complete this work. I am grateful to my siblings and extended family for their help and encouragement, as well as to my prayer partners and friends for all their support.

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In addition, I thank Professor Theresa Lorenzo and her team for the departmental support. Without the kind co-operation of my research participants, this study would not have been possible. Thank you.



Prologue



Picture 1: A puzzle with a piece that seems not to fit. An analogy of a popular South African proverb “ungenaphi?” which means, “where do you fit in?”

The analogy of a puzzle with a piece that seems not to fit is used to explain how this study developed. In South Africa, there is a popular proverb which says “Ungenaphi?”. This means

that one must not put one's nose into matters that do not concern one. It further translates to one being advised or warned to mind one's own business. Using this analogy, I want to draw your attention to how I fit into the study, although I may seem like a piece that does not fit in the puzzle of the D/deaf community.

I am Unati Stemela, a middle-aged black female and a hearing person. I was born in Mthatha, a rural town situated in the eastern part of the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Mthatha used to be the capital of the former Transkei homeland. The South African era of apartheid, which was before 1994, made laws that forced different racial groups to live separately and to develop separately. The homelands were the areas where black people were grouped to live separately and away from white people. The homelands were characterised by poverty at all levels, economy, education, health, etc., and were grossly unequal to the cities in South Africa where white people grouped together with all the privileges. I studied in my hometown until I passed matric. I furthered my studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, where I obtained my first degree in Audiology. I was recruited to Audiology by an Ear, Nose and Throat specialist (ENT), who worked at the Mthatha general hospital with my mother. My mother was a nurse and friends with this colleague. I wished to become a doctor, but this ENT specialist shared the need for professionals in the field of audiology and this was the first time I had heard of such a profession. As a result of my own research I became interested in becoming involved in this field, and my parents supported me in this career choice. Having obtained my degree, I returned to my hometown to serve my beloved communities. For the first nine years of my career, I worked in the Department of Health as an audiologist at an academic hospital and as an assistant director of the rehabilitative services in a health sub-district. I then proceeded to work

in Mthatha as a private practitioner for eight years. I provided my services to people predominantly living in the arears around the Eastern part of the Eastern Cape Province. I later moved to the central part of the Eastern Cape, to East London, where I joined academia at the University of Fort Hare in 2018, which had recently introduced the training of students in the professions of Rehabilitative Sciences.

I was born into a family where I knew no one with a disability. However, surprisingly, I found myself deeply involved in issues of people with disabilities and somehow found myself being some kind of self-appointed advocate for this special group of people. This continued until I developed an interest in studying disability further. Life chose this path for me and I willingly accepted the call. I love my work and I could not have followed any other occupation. Serving where I feel am needed and making a difference in the lives of people who appreciate even the small efforts and support our services render, is priceless to me. One might ask, “Why does a woman with no personal experience of disability bother mingling in issues of disability. Ungenaphi? Where do you fit in? Well, if I were Kermit, as shown below, I would simply sit back and say “but...that is none of my business”. It is possible that some of the readers of this work will feel that this is not my business. This may even be justifiable.



Figure 1: Kermit, a popular meme used on social media and internet to denote hypocrisy.

Let me take you through the journey of why and how I made this my business. In my trajectory of occupation, I have had a lot of experience working with people with disabilities, their organisations, families and communities. This made me interested in understanding disability more to serve my profession from a better position of understanding issues of disability, especially because I had no personal experience of disability. My quest for knowledge in this field led me to this study. In the introductory chapter, where I introduce myself as a researcher, and state my positionality in this study, I detail my involvement journey with disability and how I came to study for a PhD in this field. In addition to the quest for knowledge, I have had personal experiences in my daily professional interactions, which led me to conduct research. I would like to share some of these experiences.

One of the duties I perform as an audiologist is neonatal screening for hearing loss. This screening is conducted on babies at birth, or a few days, after to identify babies with hearing loss early so that they can receive early interventions. The early interventions are aimed at assisting them from the start so that they can learn language and be placed in appropriate schools at an at the same age as other children, including those without hearing barriers. Before I conduct this screening, I speak to the mothers and explain what I will be doing with their new-born babies to give them a chance to ask questions before they give consent for their babies to be screened. Some of the common questions I get are around the issue of whether the children who are diagnosed with profound hearing loss will be able to get into schools and later get jobs if the assistive devices and medical interventions do not help. When I answer this question or concern, I always try to be positive with the mothers and always take the opportunity to educate and create awareness. However, I remain in a quandary because yes, the children who do not benefit from medical intervention and assistive devices are placed in schools for the D/deaf at some stage, but what do they do after years of schooling? What happens in the schools? My curiosity could only be answered by doing research on how D/deaf learners construct careers, and what support systems are there for them to do so. When I had that knowledge, I would be in a position to advise from an informed position and fulfil my professional obligations better. Besides working with new born babies, I work with all ages of people with hearing impairments and, as much as I know how to intervene clinically or how to rehabilitate, I also need to understand the experience of the disability brought about by hearing impairment and how to alleviate the fears associated with it.

Close to the hospital where I worked at was a Deaf community, which had a school that ranged from grade 1 to grade 12. I served a large population of hearing individuals as well as the minor community of D/deaf individuals. My practice in that hospital exposed me to many experiences with D/deaf individuals, where some became my friends through regular consultations and interactions. I could communicate a little through South African Sign Language which I had learnt during my training at university. When they needed help around the hospital, those who knew me came straight to me for assistance because I could communicate a little with them. Through this experience, I learnt to love working and interacting with this population of D/deaf people. I also learnt that they were normal people like myself and had the same needs as everybody else.

The government provided disability grants for people with disabilities, including D/deaf people, but some of these disability grants were temporary and needed to be renewed at times. It was then that I noted that some D/deaf people were dependent on this disability grant for their livelihoods, although they joined the Deaf community through the school, which I assume was supposed to assist them to construct future careers to support their livelihoods . This made me curious to know why they were not studying further to improve their economic status. There was also a number of D/deaf individuals who were working at the school as hostel mothers, gardeners, caretakers, etc. Some worked at local firms as carpenters and builders and some were self-employed, working as painters and plumbers etc. I noted that although some were working, they worked mostly in menial jobs, I asked myself why this was so, because these people did not give me an impression of any inability except that of not being able to hear and speak. This first work experience laid the foundational background for this study.

When I changed my first place of work, I became a rehabilitation services' manager in a sub-district, in the same province. While working with communities and people with disabilities in those communities and their organisations, I noticed a trend of limited education amongst people with disabilities, especially those who were born with the disabilities. I also noted that some families were using the disability grant for the survival of the entire family and there was no improvement in the lives of the people with disabilities. This was the result of many factors, among which were the general poverty of the province, which was worse in families of people with disabilities. This raised my disability consciousness and made me hope that in my journey of life, I would do some work which would benefit the larger community of people living with disabilities. I then enrolled and completed a Master's Degree in Public Health, where my mini-thesis focused on the communication challenges of D/deaf patients in hospital settings. This work contributed to the hospital's decision to enrol its frontline workers for Sign Language training short courses. I was pleased with this contribution to the D/deaf community. My initial university training, work experience and contact with disability has been mainly with people with hearing disabilities. This experience, together with my observations, reinforced the foundation of this study.

My further life experience was to be employed at a university, as the head of the Department of Rehabilitative Sciences. This paved my way to enrolling for a PhD and gave me the opportunity to study further and explore the big questions I had been asking myself through the journey of my career. This study then brought a roof to the house that I had been building throughout my career journey with D/deaf community interactions and studies. My hope is that this study will once again contribute to the education and career construction of D/deaf learners.

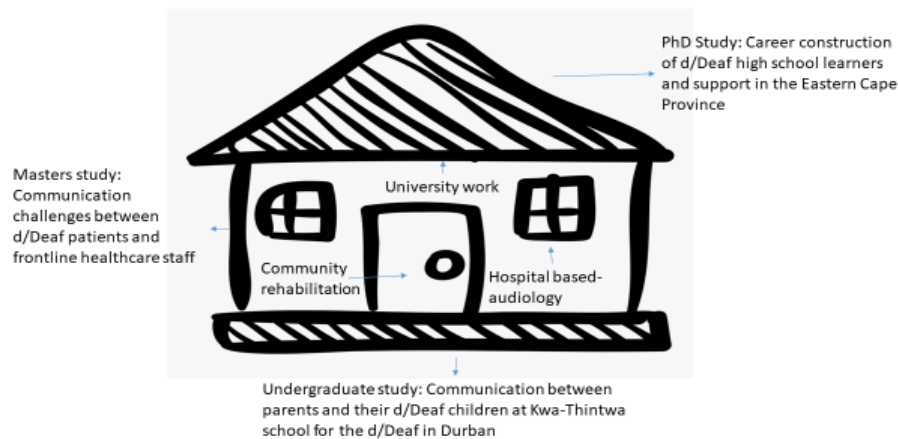


Figure 3: Researcher graphic showing the build up to her PhD study.

To conduct this research, I needed to hear directly from the learners, their parents, teachers, the Department of Education officials and to review the policies and guiding documents. Situating this work in Disability Studies allows access to the target audience. My occupation, daily interaction with disability, quest for knowledge in this field, my love for my roots, my hopes for the future and my aspirations to contribute new knowledge in this field, all seemed to fall into place this field. It was on the basis of this background that I had the courage to dare this thesis. I therefore invite you to read on and enjoy my process of knowledge building through the pages of this thesis.

Abstract

D/deaf people typically are not employed, or work in menial jobs, although they have been through high¹ school in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The researcher has not observed them in professional careers. However, there is no empirical evidence why the D/deaf are excluded from the formal labour market after schooling. Understanding the underlying factors influencing such observations was important. The problem manifested in unemployment in the formal labour sector, but the researcher wanted to understand the root cause of this problem in depth.

The aim of the study is to explore and critically analyse the D/deaf high school learners' construction of their careers and the supports available to them in constructing and realising their career aspirations.

The international literature reviewed identifies knowledge gaps concerning career construction and supportive imperatives of D/deaf high school learners. The theory of career construction by Savickas (2005) frames this study and has been used throughout to guide and inform the study.

This is a descriptive qualitative case study of career construction and support (Creswell, 2013). It was conducted in two of the five schools for the Deaf in two districts of the Eastern Cape. The learners came from rural, semi-rural and semi-urban homes. The schools (rural and semi-rural) were purposefully selected to participate in the study. The study population includes four participant groups; the deaf learners in high school (grade 10 -12), their parents, the teachers

¹ This is the Further Education and Training band in South Africa. It starts from grade 8 to grade 12.

involved in the career guidance of the learners and members of the Department of Basic Education who were responsible for career guidance in deaf high schools. The data was collected using multiple methods: focus group discussions, individual interviews and document reviews.

The findings indicate that careers are constructed under adverse conditions. These lead to learners' perceptions of limited support. The challenges with learning the school curriculum was a barrier to acquiring basic skills required for their careers. The challenges include an inability to use of South African Sign Language, a critical barrier affecting communication across participants (learners, teachers, Department of Education officials and parents). This impacted on teaching, learning, support, guidance and general communication. The contextual challenges and limited support structures negatively influence the way D/deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province construct their future careers, their parents, the education system and the role played by organisations of Deaf people. The study shows that careers are constructed in a context of both positive and negative influences. The combination of both the negative influences and limited supports impacts more heavily on career construction than do the positive influences. D/deaf people in the Eastern Cape have limited opportunities to obtain employment in professional occupations because of the way the education system and society prepares them for such careers. The issues of colonialism and the previous apartheid regime still influence both the education system and the South African society.

Table of Contents

Preliminaries

Title page-----	ii
Declaration-----	iii
Dedication-----	iv
Acknowledgements-----	v
Prologue-----	vi
Abstract-----	xiv
Table of Contents-----	xvi
List of tables, figures and pictures-----	xxiii
List of appendices-----	xxvii
List of abbreviations-----	xxviii
Definition of terms-----	xxix
Chapter 1-----	1
1. Introduction & Background-----	1
1.1 Introduction-----	1
1.2 Problem identification-----	1

1.3 The focus of the study-----	3
1.4 The rationale of the study-----	4
1.5 The context of the study-----	6
1.6 The research question-----	9
1.7 The aim of the study-----	9
1.8 The objectives of the study-----	10
1.9 The conclusion-----	10
Chapter 2-----	12
2. Literature review and theoretical framework-----	12
2.1 The approach to literature review-----	13
2.2 Alignment of the study to the general discourse-----	13
2.3 Alignment of the study to the international discourse-----	19
2.4 Alignment of the study to national discourse-----	25
2.5 Deafness and education in South Africa-----	29
2.6 Career construction literature-----	31
2.7 Parental support for career construction-----	34
2.8 Theoretical framing of the study-----	35
2.9 The conclusion-----	40
Chapter 3 -----	41
3. Research Methodology-----	41
3.1 Introduction-----	41

3.2 The philosophical approach-----	42
3.2.1 The paradigm of the study-----	43
3.2.1.1 The ontology of the study-----	44
3.2.1.2 The epistemology of the study-----	44
3.2.2 Methodology-----	45
3.2.2.1 The design of the study-----	46
3.2.2.2 The Approach to the case-----	47
3.1.1.1 The boundaries of the case-----	48
3.1.2 The study sites-----	48
3.1.3 The study population-----	49
3.1.4 The participants' inclusion and exclusion criteria-----	49
3.1.5 The sampling-----	50
3.1.6 The data collection methods-----	51
3.1.6.1 Focus groups-----	52
3.1.6.1.1 Focus groups for learners-----	53
3.1.6.1.2 Focus groups for teachers-----	54
3.1.6.2 Individual interviews-----	54
3.1.6.2.1 Individual interviews with parents-----	55
3.1.6.2.2 Individual interviews with officials-----	55
3.1.6.3 Document analysis-----	55
3.1.6.3.1 Approach to document analysis-----	56

3.1.6.3.2	Documents sample management and organisation-----	58
3.1.6.3.3	The document analysis methods-----	58
3.1.7	Data collection tools and equipment-----	59
3.1.8	Procedure for data collection-----	60
3.1.9	Data processing-----	62
3.1.9.1	Data analysis, interpretation and management-----	62
3.1.9.1.1	Focus groups and interview data analysis-----	64
3.1.9.1.1.1	Level one of data analysis-----	66
3.1.9.1.1.2	Level two of data analysis-----	67
3.1.9.1.1.3	Level three of data analysis-----	69
3.1.9.1.2	Document review data analysis-----	70
3.1.9.1.2.1	Level one of document analysis-----	71
3.1.9.1.2.2	Level two of document analysis-----	72
3.1.9.1.2.3	Level three of document analysis-----	73
3.1.10	Data representation-----	73
3.1.11	Data management system and storage-----	74
3.1.12	Case study validation/rigour-----	74
3.1.13	Ethical considerations-----	75
Chapter 4	-----	78
4	Findings -----	78
4.1	Introduction-----	78

4.2	Objective one-----	80
4.2.1	The learners-----	81
4.2.1.1	Theme 1: Career aspirations-----	84
4.2.1.1.1	Sub-theme 1: Aspired categories of occupations-----	85
4.2.1.1.2	Sub-theme 2: Career education information exposure-----	88
4.2.1.1.3	Sub-theme 3: Career construction and support-----	91
4.3	Objective two-----	97
4.3.1	The parents-----	97
4.3.1.1	Theme 2: Parental support for career construction of learners-----	100
4.3.1.1.1	Sub-theme 1: Parents' thoughts about children's future careers----	100
4.3.1.1.2	Sub-theme 2: Parents' supporting role in career construction -----	102
4.3.1.1.3	Sub-theme 3: Parents' opinions on children's abilities and the curriculum-----	106
4.4	Objective three-----	110
4.4.1	The Department of Education teachers and officials-----	110
4.4.1.1	Theme 3: Curricular support methods-----	111
4.4.1.1.1	Sub-theme 1: The current curriculum issues-----	112
4.4.1.1.2	Sub-theme 2: Capability of D/deaf learners and placements in schools- -----	119
4.4.1.1.3	Sub-theme 3: Curricular support for career construction-----	125
4.4.1.2	Theme 4: Extracurricular support -----	127
4.4.1.2.1	Sub-theme 1: Extracurricular activities-----	128

4.4.1.2.2	Sub-theme 2: Available post-school support-----	128
4.5	Objective Four-----	131
4.5.1	Document1: Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)-----	132
4.5.2	Document2: The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for South African Sign Language (SASL) Grades R-12-----	133
4.5.3	Document 3: Education White Paper 6-----	134
4.5.4	Document4: National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS)-----	135
4.5.5	Document 5: National Policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the nation curriculum statement grades R-12-----	136
4.5.6	Document 6: Age requirements for admission to an ordinary public school--	138
4.6	Matching of findings to the objectives of the study-----	140
4.7	More findings worth noting, although not part of the objectives of this study----	145
4.8	Recommendations from all participants on discussed topics-----	146
4.9	The conclusion-----	148
Chapter 5	-----	149
5	Discussion-----	149
5.1	Introduction-----	149
5.2	Career aspirations, construction and support for D/deaf learners-----	150
5.3	The communication barrier-----	157
5.4	The curriculum challenges-----	160
5.5	Support for learners for career construction-----	166

5.6	Policy issues-----	169
5.7	Thesis building-----	173
5.7.1	The approach to thesis building-----	173
5.7.2	The theoretical lens-----	173
5.7.3	The suggestions from the data-----	174
5.7.4	The new knowledge gained from the study-----	177
5.7.5	The thesis statement/argument-----	178
5.8	The study response to the phenomenon-----	180
5.9	The implications of the study-----	181
5.9.1	Implications of the context-----	181
5.9.2	Implications for practice-----	182
5.9.3	Implication for theory-----	183
5.9.4	Implications for methodology-----	185
5.9.5	Implications for future research-----	185
5.10	The limitations of the study-----	185
5.11	List of references-----	187
5.12	Appendices-----	210

List of Tables, Figures & Pictures

Tables

Table 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Table 2: Data collection process representation by the researcher

Table 3: Documents inclusion and exclusion criteria

Table 4: Document data organisation

Table 5: Documents inclusion and exclusion criteria

Table 6: Framework used for organising data

Table 7: Level 1 data analysis process for learners, as an example

Table 8: Document analysis procedure followed by the researcher

Table 9: Key issues across the study themes and findings of this study objectives

Figures

Figure 1: The puzzle with an ill-fitting piece

Figure 2: Kermit, a popular meme used on social internet to denote hypocrisy

Figure 3: Map of South Africa, highlighting the Eastern Cape Province

Figure 4: Researcher graphic showing the build-up to the PhD study

Figure 5: Mapping of the literature reviewed

Figure 6: The researcher's representation of the conceptual framework of the study

Figure 7: Organisation of the methodology chapters by the researcher

Figure 8: Researcher's design of the philosophical approach to the study

Figure 9: Phases of data collection process as they happened

Figure 10: Phases of data analysis as they happened

Figure 11: An illustration of level 3 synthesis of data analysis

Figure 12: Career construction and support of D/deaf learners' representation of the findings

Figure 13: Theme 1 and subthemes from data of learners' focus group discussion

Figure 14: A graphic illustration of career aspiration of D/deaf learners

Figure 15: Theme 2 and subthemes from data of parents' individual interviews

Figure 16: A graphic representation of the communication challenges

Figure 17: Theme 3 curricular methods to support career construction

Figure 18: Theme 4 extracurricular methods to support career construction

Figure 19: Summary of findings as per objectives

Figure 20: Main issues from themes

Figure 21: Recommendations of participants

Figure 22: What the researcher thinks should happen during career construction

Figure 23: What the researcher sees happening through the study

Figure 24: A graphic representation of support challenges for career construction

Figure 25: A summary of thesis building

Pictures

Picture 1: A collage of photos taken during the focus group discussion with learners from both sites.

Picture 2: A collage of photos taken during the focus group discussions with learners from both sites.

Picture 3: A photo of a deep rural village representing typical homesteads where the learners come from.

Picture 4: A collage of photos of some of the department of education career guiding documents reviewed.

List of appendices

- Appendix 1: Ethics clearance certificate
- Appendix 2: Eastern Cape Department of Education Provincial office permission letter
- Appendix 3: Eastern Cape Department of Education Districts offices permission letters
- Appendix 4: Eastern Cape Department of Education Schools permission letters
- Appendix 5: Letter of request, consent and assent form for learners' sample
- Appendix 6: Letter of request, consent form for parents' sample
- Appendix 7: Letter of request, consent form for teachers and officials' sample
- Appendix 8: Focus group discussion guide for learners
- Appendix 9: Interview guide for parents
- Appendix 10: Focus group discussion guide for teachers
- Appendix 11: Interview guide for officials
- Appendix 12: Graphic works designed and developed for this study
- Appendix 13: Sign language interpreter's certificate
- Appendix 14: A confirmation letter of the language editing of the study.

List of abbreviations

SASL	South African Sign Language
LO	Life Orientation
DOE	Department of Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
WHO	World Health Organization
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements
UNCRP	United Nations Convention on Rights of People with disabilities
ICF	International Classification of Function

Definition of terms

Audiologist: A professional who specialises in hearing assessments and management, balance disorders and language development.

Rehabilitation services' practitioner: A professional who works with different disabilities and mostly renders community-based rehabilitation services.

White-collar and Blue-collar occupations: These are terms to describe manual occupations (meaning literally “to work with hands”) and non-manual occupations (working with brains) (Docherty & Van der Velden, 2012). Historically, these terms had strong connotations of social class. The blue-collar class was the working class and the white-collar class was the middle class. In countries like Italy and France, the division between these classes meant different systems of payment, where the blue-collar class would receive wages and white-collar class receive salaries. In France, these labour codes distinguished between superior intellectual qualities of white-collar work and inferior intellectual qualities required for blue collar occupations (Docherty & Van der Velden, 2012). By the 1960s, these terms were generally used in English. They have been carefully picked for this study for their explicit distinction of occupational categories and are used in the context of disabilities.

Deaf: This is a term used to refer to people who identify with the Deaf culture and do not take deafness as a disability but rather as a characteristic. They always denote themselves as “Deaf” with a capital letter “D”.

deaf: In this study this term “deaf” with a lower-case letter is used to refer to people who have been diagnosed with a hearing impairment and are placed in special schools for people with hearing impairments (with different levels of severity), who do not necessarily identify with “Deaf” culture. These people are those who take deafness as a diagnosis and a physical defect and not as their characteristic or culture.

D/deaf: This term has been crafted for the purpose of this study to refer to learners in the schools for the Deaf who were participants in this study. During the study, the learners were not asked about their identity in deafness, whether they were culturally Deaf or not. For an accommodative term, the researcher crafted this new term which, for the purpose of this study, seemed suitable.

DeafSA: This is the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA). It acts as the national research, information and community action organisation on behalf of \pm 1.5 million South Africans that are culturally and linguistically Deaf, hard of hearing and Deafblind. DeafSA, formerly known as the South African National Council for the Deaf (SANCD), was founded in 1929. In 1995 the former SANCD was transformed to a new democratically elected organisation, namely, Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA). DeafSA promotes the interests of the Deaf and hard-of-hearing effectively on a national level in South Africa. DeafSA’s national constitution and activities are, therefore, aimed at all people who are Deaf, hard-of-hearing or Deaf-blind. DeafSA is also the coordinating, umbrella organisation that facilitates services to the South African Deaf, Deafened and hard-of-hearing communities.

Parent: Is (a) biological or adoptive parent or legal guardian of a learner (b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner or (c) the person who legally undertakes to fulfil the obligations of a person in (a) and (b) towards education at a learning institution (South African Schools Act, 1996). In this study “parent” refers to anyone who plays a role of a caregiver to the learner.

Official: Refers to a government employee at a school (a teacher) or in a district office.

Policy: Refers to any government approved document, including policies, white papers and guidelines.

Chapter 1

1. Introduction & Background

1.1. Introduction

The first chapter introduces the origin, focus and the purpose of this study. The study is a response to a social problem, which is explained in this chapter, as is the context of the study and its justification. Lastly, and most importantly, the main question of the study, its aim and objectives are also outlined.

1.2. Problem Identification

The observations the researcher made as an audiologist and rehabilitation services' practitioner in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa showed that most D/deaf people do not participate in the formal labour market after schooling. She observed that either they were not employed at all or that they worked in menial jobs. They were not seen in most careers that are regarded as professional². However, there was no empirical evidence to determine why the D/deaf were excluded from formal the labour market after schooling. Her assumption was that a professional qualification typically is part of a professional career trajectory. Understanding the underlying factors influencing such observations was important to design an intervention

² A person engaged or qualified or belonging in/to a profession, with the specialised knowledge, competence or skills expected of that profession after a long and intensive academic preparation. Any person earning their living from a specific profession (Merriam-Webster dictionary).

strategy. She was particularly interested in the formal labour market because it offers stable salaries, fluidity and it is more dynamic than the informal labour market (Morales *et.al.*, 2019). The informal labour market is generally viewed as an inferior segment of employment as it does not contribute to social security or pay taxes. It also lacks the elements of being dynamic, fluid and offering stable salaries (Morales *et.al.*, 2019).

International studies generally indicate that D/deaf people are much less frequently employed than hearing people (Rydberg, 2010). The level of education also influences the type of occupation, the higher the level of education the more likely people are to be employed in skilled occupations, such as managerial and professional positions (Rydberg, 2010). The disability and employment statistics of South Africa also indicate that labour markets generally have fewer persons with disabilities (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The problem manifests as unemployment in the formal labour sector. However, the researcher wanted to get a deep understanding of the root cause of the manifesting problem.

She surmises that education opens doors of employment, whether formal or informal; work then opens doors of earning an income; and an income offers economic freedom. Education is one critical element focused on in South Africa since 1994, in redressing the previous disadvantages of apartheid (Department of Education, 2001). The system of apartheid excluded black children with disabilities from education that prepared them to enter higher education and, for most, there was no progression after school (Mutanga, 2017). The segregation of ‘special schools’ for children with disabilities resulted in the under-resourcing of these schools for blacks compared with those for whites (Mutanga, 2017). Inclusion of learners who present with disabilities in education and within communities where they have always belonged can

assist them to become productive and contributing members of society (Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

Schools of the D/deaf were ‘special schools’ because deafness was viewed by the government as a disability under the paradigm of the medical model, which argues that children with disabilities must be given specialised care by medical professionals in order to be educated (Nel *et al.*, 2013). D/deaf learners are positioned in this study as being disabled, although the researcher is aware is that Deaf cultures denote deafness as a characteristic and not a disability (Holcomb, 2013). Disability is conceptualised as a product of the interplay between barriers caused by the existing impairment, the attitudes and environment which negatively affects the maximum societal participation of the person affected (UNCRP, 2007). Deafness is a physical impairment limiting communication with hearing members of society, but it is not necessarily associated with intellectual or cognitive impairment (Paresis *et al.*, 1996). Therefore, deafness when not associated with other disabilities, should not limit attainment of aspired careers within the capabilities of D/deaf learners.

South Africa is currently 26 years post-apartheid, but manifestations of the apartheid era still exist in the education of black D/deaf learners. Details of what apartheid and post-apartheid era mean are detailed in the contextual background below. This study has been designed to explore how careers are constructed by D/deaf learners and how they are supported to carry this out.

1.3. The study focus

This study focuses on the exploration of the way D/deaf learners construct their careers while in high school and the support they receive in advancing their career construction in order to

be employable in the formal labour market. Career construction is the process of crafting an individual's occupation or profession (Brown & Lent, 2013). The study focuses on learners in grades 10 to 12. According to the career development stages, this is the stage where careers are being constructed (Super, 1953).

1.4 The rationale of the study

The Eastern Province is the second poorest province in South Africa (Stats SA, 2011). Before 1994 it was categorised as mainly a black homeland, characterised by poverty and unemployment; and it remains underdeveloped. It is important to find ways of redressing the inequalities in our society (Department of Education, 2001). Disparities between persons with and without disabilities are quite obvious, where people with disabilities are more vulnerable to the poverty trap due to inadequate access to resources for development (Stats SA, 2011). Disabled children are still more often excluded within education systems than non-disabled children (Cram *et al.*, 2013). D/deaf learners in this province need education that will guide them towards constructing careers that will improve this historic disadvantage. Education prepares individuals for future participation in gain full employment engagement in the labour market, which improves the quality of their lives (Stats SA, 2011).

Deafness is amongst the most common disabilities in the South African population (Statistics SA, 2011). Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) estimates that the national prevalence of is 7, 5%. The Eastern Cape Province has 9,6% of people with disabilities, the 4th highest in the country (Statistics SA, 2011). Hearing disabilities make up 3,6% of the disabled population in the Eastern Cape and is the 2nd most prevalent disability, following blindness. Within the

community of Deaf people the number of those who use sign language as first language is estimated at 500,000. Of this figure, about 66 percent of Deaf persons in South Africa are uneducated, about 70 percent of the Deaf population is not working, and, on average, the general level of knowledge of a Deaf adult is estimated to be almost equivalent to that of an eight-year-old child who does not have a hearing loss (Storbeck, 2010).

The situation described above is largely due to the fact that teachers of the D/deaf are not adequately equipped to intervene early and effectively; nor is the education system sufficiently accessible to D/deaf learners (Storbeck, 2010). Provincial profiles show that the Eastern Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal have the highest proportions of economically inactive persons with disabilities (19,1% and 15,3%). The Eastern Cape Province is predominantly rural and the magnitude of disability in this province is high (Statistics South Africa, 2011). The D/deaf learners in the Eastern Cape can therefore be considered a marginalised group. Because of this, understanding how they construct their careers and what supports are available is especially important.

The purpose of the current study is to generate new knowledge about the construction of careers of D/deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape. This knowledge has been obtained by exploring the process of career construction of D/deaf learners in this province and how they are supported to construct their future careers. Career aspirations of D/deaf learners and opportunities for their development are explored. Aspirations contribute to weaving life themes that pattern individuals' work lives (Brown & Lent, 2013). Knowing these aspirations contributes to understanding how they construct their careers.

There is a paucity of knowledge about how parents contribute towards the career construction of their children in D/deaf schools in the Eastern Cape. This knowledge could assist in understanding the roles parents play in supporting the career construction of learners.

Little is known about career development policies and how the Department of Basic Education translates policy into practice in the process of career construction for D/deaf learners in South Africa. This information would contribute to the body of knowledge about policies and could be used for evaluation of policies and facilitation of further discussions in this area.

1.5 The study context

For a better understanding of the context of this study, it is necessary to understand the history of colonialism and apartheid history of South Africa. Tracing back to the 1400s, history relates an era which was called the discovery of the “new world”, where people from the Asian/European continents became aware of the continents and countries to the South of the globe (Mignolo, 2011). Upon their discovery, they enslaved black people and engulfed the global southern countries’ economic and general development in oppression (Mignolo, 2011). The aim was to make themselves rich and powerful by taking the people and resources of the global south; this was the start of the colonisation of the global south by the global north (Maldonado-Torres, 2018). This colonialism was a powerful force which targeted the power (domination, control, exploitation), knowledge (ways of knowing and production of knowledge) and the being (racial hierarchy, enslavement) of the people in the global south (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014). South Africa was not spared from the power of global colonialism. When white people settled in South Africa and were in power they then, in the 1940s developed

laws of apartheid. This was another era in South Africa. The laws of apartheid enforced racism³ which segregated black people from white people in South Africa. Racism had white supremacy laws and these oppressed black people. Black people were driven to homelands while whites remained in cities and other places of advantage. The oppression was evident in the unequal sharing of resources and infrastructure which favoured white people. The era of apartheid continued until 1994, when South Africa became a democratic country. The current era is post-apartheid, and this marks the time this study is conducted in South Africa. The study has been conducted in the former Transkei and Ciskei areas, which now form part of the Eastern Cape Province; they are the areas highlighted in red on the map below. These were the former homelands in the old South Africa. This province is largely rural and remains behind in terms of development, compared with other provinces in the country.

³ Racism is a global hierarchy of human superiority and inferiority, politically, culturally and economically produced for centuries by the institutions of the colonial world system (Grosfoguel,2015)



Figure 2: The map of South Africa, highlighting the Eastern Cape Province.

During an era before apartheid (in 1860s) the missionaries who came to South Africa reached the South African Deaf community (Storbeck & Martin, 2010). They established the first school for the Deaf in the country in 1863 (Storbeck & Martin, 2010). Many schools were established after that and the differentiating factor among these schools, and the motivation for establishing them, was the different view on the modes of communication to be used for education. Some schools used oralism⁴, some used sign language and some used a combination of these modes of communication (Storbeck & Martin, 2010).

During the apartheid era, Deaf communities were also shifted along racial lines, according to the apartheid laws. This led to more schools being established according to each ethnic group

⁴ Oralism is the system of teaching profoundly deaf people to communicate by the use of speech and lip-reading rather than sign language.

and spoken language (Storbeck & Martin, 2010). The poverty of the homelands affected the resources of these schools, but to the advantage of the development of their own sign language and strengthening of their identity as part of a Deaf culture compared to the white Deaf schools which were more resourced and used oral modes of communication (Storbeck & Martin, 2010).

From the post-apartheid era to date, there are 47 schools who serve the Deaf population in South Africa. In the Eastern Cape Province only, there are five public schools for the D/deaf. Three of these schools go up to grade 12 and the others are primary schools. One of these high schools is situated in the former Transkei homeland which is a more rural area and accommodates learners from the deep rural areas of its region. A second school is also in a rural area, but accommodates learners who come from rural areas, semi-urban areas and townships. The third high school is in an urban area which, during the apartheid era, was in the former South Africa but now is part of the Eastern Cape Province. It is in this context of a politically marginalised group of D/deaf people, an economically poor province and a historically disadvantaged black population that career construction of D/deaf learners has been studied.

1.6 The research questions.

The research question is: How do D/deaf high school learners construct their careers and how are they supported?

1.7 The aim of the study

The aim of the study is to explore and critically analyse the career construction of D/deaf high school learners and the supports available to them to realise their career aspirations.

1.8. The study objectives

There are four objectives in this study:

1. To describe career aspirations of D/deaf high school learners, their efforts towards career construction and their perspectives on how they are supported to construct them.
2. To explore parent perspectives and roles in supporting their D/deaf children to construct future careers.
3. To analyse the methods and processes in school curricula and extracurricular used to support deaf learners to construct future careers.
4. To critically review policies and guidelines of the Departments of Education that address career development of D/deaf learners.

1.9 The conclusion

My journey to the build-up of this study brings a backdrop of the previous knowledge that I came with into the building of new knowledge. My positionality meant that my previous knowledge would not interfere with or influence the way the new knowledge unfolded. These two statements might seem to contradict each other, but this contradiction has led to gaining new insights on the topic of research and as the journey continues both the old and new knowledge provide a platform of better understanding of issues related to this field of study.

Having introduced the study and its ontological foundations, the next chapters discuss the literature reviewed, the methodology used for the study, the findings, with a discussion of them, and building the thesis.

Chapter 2

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1.The approach to literature review

The purposes of the current literature review include the pulling together of ideas of work done globally on the concepts of the study; to provide a consolidated picture of what has already been researched in this particular field of study; to identify critical knowledge gaps; to motivate for the closure of those gaps through future research and to highlight what is known and what needs to be known (Webster & Watson, 2002).

Certainly, the review cannot capture all the work done in this field, but it shows global snapshots linked to the study. It captures the international and national discourses and trends on the topic of research, has been organised in a way that gives global and national perspectives aligned to the research. It includes literature on career construction, parental roles in career construction and D/deaf education in South Africa. In addition, it includes the discourse of disability, its models, effects and types. The literature also focuses on the importance of the aspirations of the learners in the process of career construction, the role played by extracurricular activities in supporting career construction and the importance of the Department of Basic Education in supporting career construction of learners. The figure below

is to assist readers to understand the arrangement of literature and its flow.

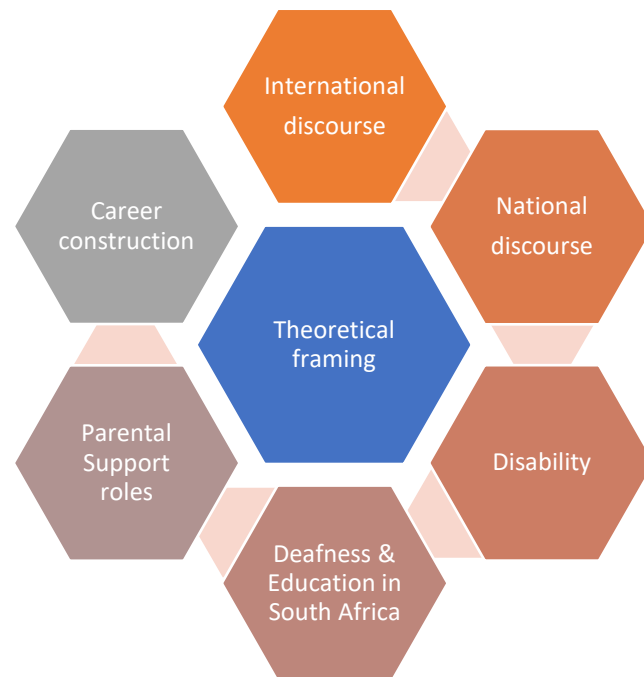


Figure 5: The mapping of the literature reviewed.

2.2 Alignment of the study to the general discourse of disabilities

Defining disability

Disability is a dynamic phenomenon that originates from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitude-related and environmental barriers that prevent full participation in their communities equitably (UNCRP, 2007). Persons with disabilities are the ones presenting with chronic bodily, cognitive, intelligence and sensation pathologies(UNCRP, 2007).

The International Classification of Functioning (ICF), defines disability is an all-encompassing umbrella term for impairments, activity and participation limitation. It highlights the flawed e interaction between a person's medically diagnosed status and the environmental impacts.

The ICF, gives common manner of reference and a model of describing medical diagnosed statuses. It is the framework acceptable to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) for health and disability. It is used as a basis of concepts for defining the quantification and forming for policy health and disability (WHO, 2002). When this study refers to disabilities, the meaning is based on the above definitions.

People living with disabilities have suffered great inequalities (Sandahl, 2003). The healthcare system has abnormalized or diseased them, religious systems have associated them with evil powers, they have suffered discrimination in civil rights like housing, employment and education, they are often not well represented and isolated in society (Sandahl, 2003). This statement draws a picture of disempowerment of people with disabilities.

There are different models of disability, which are briefly explained below for clarity. Some of the models are: the medical model, the social model, the biopsychosocial and the stigma model. They represent diverse paradigms of disability; each model shows a different angle of the phenomenon. However, all these perspectives are necessary in their contexts (Palmer & Harley, 2012). The most frequently used of these models in disability discourse are the social and medical models; other models are hybrids of these two (Palmer & Harley, 2012). The ICF has added another model, which is a synthesis of these two - the biopsychosocial model. Another interesting model is the stigma model. For the purpose of where this research is situated in disability studies, only these models are discussed.

The Medical Model of Disability

The medical framework of disability emphasises limitation of physical function and locates disability within an individual. It denotes the medical aetiology that stresses a causal relationship between the origins and outcomes of disability. It is the physical impairments that cause disability (Palmer & Harley, 2012). Disabilities are treated as diagnostic categories.

This model assigns persons with disability a sick role and their disability is defined according to the lack of a valued personal characteristic. It requires people with disabilities to surrender their autonomy to professional direction (Artiles, 2013). It focuses on methods to cure an individual or to return to normalcy. It attempts to treat the body in isolation from the person by reducing illness to disordered bodily function. This model does not consider a person's social or emotional sources of disability like, stigma, prejudice and public policy (Disabled People South Africa, 2001). The medical model has many limitations for people with disabilities, especially people with deafness. It requires them to use assistive devices like hearing aids and if they do not benefit from these, then it limits them from developing their aspirations and puts a stigma on them with an assumption that a deaf person does not have the potential to achieve a proper education.

The interest of this study might be contrary to the medical model of disability, but still worth to be aware of it because it speaks to the lived experiences of people with disability and it explains the aetiology of disability. For this study, it also highlights that learners have a medical condition that leads to their being categorised as people with disabilities and belonging in a Deaf culture.

The Social Model of Disability

The Social Model was developed by Oliver in 1990. It surmises social construction of the concept of disability and the subjection of persons living with disabilities to power struggles in society, institutions and material environments (Oliver, 1990). In terms of this theory, disability can be eliminated when the societal and material hinderances are wiped off. However, this model has been criticised for many aspects that it ignores but mainly for ignoring the personal experience of persons living with disabilities and for viewing disability as boxed in particular rigid compartment categories (Oliver, M. in Emens & Stein, 2016). This model has been further criticised by disability scholars for turning a blind eye to the physical impact of disability and its effect and role of the impairment, attributing disability to social contrast only (Hughes & Patterson, 1997). The social model of disability takes the broader view that the capacity to perform activities relies on social involvement. It argues that the restriction of operation is not caused by disease but is a result of social structure (Goering, 2015). It focuses on the notion that society disables people. Discrimination and disability become one thing according to this model.

The social model agrees with the fact that people living with disabilities have bodily impairments which are medically diagnosed that may prevent them from certain desired activities and these conditions may require time and again repetitive medical intervention. However, it pursues the view point of hinderances emanating from the hostility of their societies, being disabled more by the world perceived as made mainly for people without disabilities (Artiles, 2013). This model can assist in designing strategies to freer people living with disabilities from the chains of undesired perceived oppression and discrimination by

picking up contributing factors and work towards eliminating them (Oliver, 1990). Through identification of societal hinderances the social model allows for solutions which go beyond individualised strategies. According to this model, people with disabilities cease to be tragic failures and are viewed as people who are unfairly treated by the manner in which the society is structured (Palmer & Hurley, 2011). The current study is aligned to this model of disability because it focuses on education, which is a social construct, and the population of D/deaf learners who may belong to the Deaf culture.

The study explores the career constructions of these learners and the social support they receive. It examines how learners prepare to be part of society and how the specific, related society supports them. This model also speaks to the political oppression of people with disabilities. It takes place in a previously politically oppressed context, using this social model helped to understand society's role in the context of the career construction of D/deaf learners.

The Biopsychosocial Model

Disability is complex in that it challenges one's physical body which is personal and also challenges the society and environment where one lives (WHO, 2002). It always interacts at personal and contextual levels. However, sometimes it becomes intrinsic to the person, while for other people the disability is entirely caused by external factors. In this respect attending to disability issues using both medical and social strategies to responses may be deemed most suitable both intervention angles complement each other in bringing comprehensive solutions (WHO, 2002). The ICF believes that the best model in managing disability should incorporate solutions from both models, in this view the biosocial model fits well. This integrated model is used as a foundation of ICF

The Stigma Model

This model was derived from Goffman (1963). It focuses on the stigmatisation of people living with disabilities. It attributes disability to as the social limitations imposed to individuals with physical and mental impairments when they are not able to do what society deems normal (Goffman, 1963).

Disabilities are also classified according to types which are defined by the areas where they occur in the body; these are grouped into five categories:

1. Sensory disabilities, affecting the sense organs. For example, vision and hearing.
2. Physical disabilities, affecting the muscles and skeleton of a person. For example, cerebral palsy and muscular dystrophy.
3. Mental disabilities affecting the mental state and cognition of a person. For example, depression and schizophrenia.
4. Specific learning disabilities affect learning of children. For example, dyslexia and attention deficit disorder.
5. Medical conditions that could lead to disabilities. For example, diabetes and epilepsy.

This study focuses on sensory disabilities, and particularly the hearing disability of deafness. The literature below talks to the hearing disability (deafness) in South Africa and how D/deaf people are educated.

The Stigma Model has been mentioned because disability in some instances causes a stigma and barriers to society may be associated with the stigma associated with disability. The support that disabled learners receive may also be affected by stigma.

2.3 Alignment of the study to the international discourse

The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) represents Deaf people from all over the world (Kusters *et al.*, 2015). The WFD 2015-2018 report mentions the numbers of school going children and their academic achievement amongst Deaf children is very little in comparison to the general population of Deaf people (WDF, 2018). The education of children who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing shows promising developments internationally, but the achievements of these students remains weaker when comparing them to their hearing peers and many of them miss receiving the knowledge and skills necessary to maximise their potential (Qi & Mitchell, 2012). It becomes a challenge to navigate the current life of technology and meaningfully contribute to society when one is uneducated. Education is a necessary tool for change in society, the economy and the ideologies of the world (WFD, 2018). Studies have shown that education is a catalyst for social, economic and ideational change (Williams, 2009). Education gives abilities, information and recognition which positively influence employment and salary (Kelly *et al.*, 2016). D/deaf people must satisfy the same educational attainments as hearing people in order to compete in the job market (Kelly *et al.*, 2016). The WFD claims there is no reason for D/deaf children not to obtain the same educational outcomes as their hearing peers since deaf children have equal potential for academic progress, social skills and emotional capabilities as other children. Linguistic human rights of deaf children are compromised in education systems all over the world (Kusters *et al.*, 2015). This could be the reason why D/deaf people do not attain the same levels of education as hearing people.

International discourse on Deaf education is mainly on inclusive education as means of ensuring the education rights of D/deaf people, as outlined by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (Jokinen, 2018). The inclusive education concept has many meanings and may not be suitable for deaf children because they are still linguistically and socially excluded and this does not assist their education (Kusters *et al.*, 2015). The original United Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities does not clearly define the concept of inclusive education, and organisations of Deaf people have sought clarity of the concept (Jokinen, 2018). Inclusive education for deaf people has been further defined as ensuring that education is provided in their first language, using suitable mode and methods of communication for the individuals and spaces. These should maximise learning and general growth (Jokinen, 2018). For deaf children full inclusion is equivalent to fully supportive, manual communication and learner-oriented environment. This provides a rich environment for academic growth and the necessary development socially and emotionally. For D/deaf children to experience their full potential in life and education, they must have access to Sign Language as this enhances, rather than reduces, their abilities.(Moore, 2018). The paradigm of culture to education of deaf people advocates for Sign Language to be the most native and original linguistic method for D/deaf people and a strong resource for engaging in communication in all situations (Prihancic, 2006). Accessibility of Sign Language to D/deaf learners means receiving education that is culturally and linguistically appropriate. Sign Language is the innate language of people who became D/deaf before learning any other language (Kemaloglu & Kemaloglu, 2012). A study conducted in Lesotho maintains that not delivering education content through Sign Language denies D/deaf learners the chance to

literacy and this contributes to the unpleasing state of D/deaf education in Lesotho (Matlosa, 2012).

Article 24 of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that the rights of persons with disabilities to education are recognised. It is emphasised that this recognition should be without discrimination and should be based on equal opportunity. The signatory countries of the convention should prioritize an inclusive education system which will assist to fully develop the potential of persons living with disabilities, return their dignity and self-worth. This will realize fundamental freedoms, embrace human diversity and human rights (Murray *et al.*, 2018). Some of the governments' obligations, according to the convention, include the facilitation of the learning of Sign Language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community and to ensure that the education of persons, and in particular of children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is offered in the suitable language and mode and methods of communication for the person, and in environments which bring out the best results in education and social growth (Murray *et al.*, 2018). Employment of education professionals who are Sign Language proficient at all levels (including those with disabilities) and the training of staff would facilitate the realisation of this right by the people of the countries who are signatories of the convention (Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). The training would create awareness of disabilities, other possible modes of communication and the development of supportive educational materials and techniques. Access to general tertiary education and other avenues of lifelong learning should be ensured in the same manner as for other people who do not live with disabilities (Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). A study conducted in Kenya, which examined the training

of teachers as a tool for increasing the chances and opportunities of work options of deaf adults and increasing chances of education for deaf students, proved that the training of teachers for deaf populations has pleasing results (Johnstone & Corce, 2010). Amongst the best practices in Kenya to encourage educational development of D/deaf learners is the teachers' ability to communicate clearly in Sign Language. The use of Sign Language as the main language benefits all areas of education for children who are deaf (Namukoa, 2012). The teacher's linguistic ability and the language of teaching are important in effective delivery of educational content (Roald, 2002). Teachers who teach children who are deaf/hard of hearing are encouraged to use Sign Language as an instructional approach of the subjects they teach in schools (Namukoa, 2012). Language deprivation⁵ has negative implications which may lead to poor language outcomes for deaf people and high chances of irreversible alterations to the brain (Hall, 2017). The negative effects include delayed cognitive development, difficulties with mental health, reduced quality of life, increased trauma, and reduced literacy on health issues. The development of a D/deaf child should prioritize its focus on general health growth of all developmental milestones by amongst these, giving full access to first language foundation, like Sign Language in the case of these children (Hall, 2017). Language deprivation or delayed development has undesired effects in developmental milestones which are language-related and in the development of literacy skills (Lederberg *et al.*, 2013). Language is important for understanding educational content and for literacy.

More research studies conducted internationally also reveal evidence of issues raised by the World Federation of the Deaf and the United Nations Convention for Persons Living with

⁵ Language deprivation is lack of language access.

Disabilities. A study conducted in Sweden investigated what the parents, teachers and Deaf community leaders thought and advised concerning the careers for deaf students. In this country the population of deaf individuals was high, the facilities for educating deaf people were fully developed from preschool up to college. The educational needs of deaf students were recognised and accommodated. Deaf organisations and parents in this country were also very involved and active. The study found that, although the country has made progress in many areas, D/deaf people were still limited in possible occupational choices and that this factor could be due to limited communication in the language of the D/deaf. (DeCaro *et al.*, 2001).

The Department of Education of the United States of America, through the office of special education and rehabilitation services mentioned that it aims to make sure that learners leave high school with competitive skills to be successful and competitive with the skills to enter college without remediation. The department is changing the culture of low expectations for deaf learners and holding them to high expectations of success in general curricula. It provides support and services to people with disabilities leading to careers by ensuring access to education and employment (Yudin, 2014). The important point that Yudin (2014) raises is that learners must be held to high expectations in order to be prepared for competitive careers.

Although it is easy to believe that for students the education gives access to possibilities, the reality is that it is very difficult to even find the first job takes a lot of hard work (Angeroth, 2009). Iowa School for the Deaf has personal and career development classes for grade nines through to grade twelves. The goal of these classes was to create the transition pathways from school to employment and life that is independent. These classes help learners make career

choices as they assist in their plans and make them be realistic and relevant according to their capacity (Angeroth, 2009).

A study conducted in India to determine the attitudes of teachers and parents towards career choices for deaf and hearing people, showed that deafness was seen as a physical handicap, limiting communication with hearing members of the society. However, it was not seen as a handicap affecting intellectual abilities and skills (Parasnis *et al.*, 1996).

An article on Deafness in Sub Saharan Africa mentions that teachers who teach deaf people in Africa mostly do not have hearing loss and do not have the necessary training and accreditation that should have given them the needed knowledge and ability to work effectively with children who were born without hearing or have hearing loss. Expectations and standards were said to be low and inferior. They further mention a few nations who are exceptions, like Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya., The only opportunities deaf children who complete primary schools have are limited choices of menial jobs, instead of secondary and higher education (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003).

African societies have a range of beliefs about deafness, they either accept, protect, or reject these children, sometimes consider to kill them while still infants. These beliefs that deaf children do not have potential to succeed in life may themselves deny access to education and lead to giving up the deaf child's capability to contribute to the development of African nations (Kiyaga & Moores, 2003).

This literature reviewed gives a snapshot of the international discourse on D/deaf education. The key issue seems to be the language used in the education of D/deaf learners which

internationally affects the educational outcomes of D/deaf people. Language seems to be linked to the deprivation of educational rights.

2.4 Alignment of the study to national discourse

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, is the supreme law of the country. Law or conduct inconsistent with it is invalid and the obligations imposed by it must be fulfilled (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The second chapter of the Constitution constitutes the Bill of Rights for South Africans, which is the corner stone of its democracy. The human rights are to be upheld, promoted, protected and fulfilled by the state. Some of the key human rights, aligned to this study, are the right to education; freedom of trade, occupation and profession; freedom of language and culture and the cultural, religious and linguistic rights of communities.

The right to education gives everyone a right to basic and further education, which, through reasonable measures, the state must make available and accessible. It states that everyone has a right to receive education in the official language or language of his or her choice in public educational institutions. To ensure this, the state must consider all reasonable education alternatives (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

The right to freedom of trade, occupation and profession, gives citizens the right to choose their own trade, occupation and profession freely (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

The right to language and culture gives a right to choose one's language and to participate in the cultural life of one's choice. (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996)

These three rights are part of the list of important human rights that every South African must enjoy. The Constitution does not clearly define who is a citizen but speaks of common citizenship and refers to national legislation to provide for the way citizenship is acquired, lost or restored. It only makes a mention of all citizens' entitlement to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship. It further mentions the obligations, duties and responsibilities pertaining to citizens' human rights. It is therefore assumed that, whether individuals have a disability or not, as long as they are citizens, they have the same rights as every other citizen.

When putting citizens with disabilities in the context of these rights in South Africa, their career construction should be happening in an ideal context, fuelled by both national favourable constitutional rights and international agenda. However, the history of apartheid still seems to influence their maximum enjoyment of the human rights. To understand current practices in education, it is important to understand the historical perspective and its connection to the socio-political context (Artiles, 2011). The historical apartheid regime in South Africa created inequalities in education and the post-apartheid Department of Education has attempted to redress those inequalities, using the rights provided by the current Constitution of South Africa (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Education is thought to be the pathway to success for disadvantaged groups, yet when comparing youth living with disabilities with those without, there is a huge gap where the youth living with disabilities are achieving below their peers in finding employment and accessing tertiary institutions of education. This is, despite global laws and directives, as well as research on best and effective practices; the pathways of transition beyond high school are still proving to be inconsistent (Fleming & Fairweather, 2012).

The White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was published in 2016, focuses on setting the stage for people with different disabilities to participate fully in educational, economic and social activities (Government Gazette, 2016). The foundations of this white paper were laid by socio-political activists with disabilities in South Africa. It outlines supportive structures needed to ensure that persons with disabilities can participate fully through reasonable accommodation at work places and it sees strengthening the voice of people with disabilities as important. It replaced previous documents on national disability issues and is a forerunner of full domestication of the UNCRPD (Government Gazette, 2016). This document further reflects the South African government's commitment to people with disabilities. However, the implementation of this white paper is yet to be seen. According to the South African Constitution, no individual should face discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, disability or religion (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The education of people with disabilities is a human rights concern and the South African government appears to acknowledge this in terms of its policies (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). However, despite the provisions of the Constitution, people with disabilities in South Africa suffer injustice (Sandahl, 2003). There seems to be a gap between the government policy and its practice.

The following are some of the research studies conducted nationally which have revealed gaps or delays in the implementation of the national documents:

The National Institute for the Deaf, in South Africa, is a private occupational skills training college based in Cape Town (Western Cape Province). It is the only accredited occupational skills college for D/deaf people (De Villiers, 2010). It equips D/deaf learners with life skills,

communication skills, numeracy and computer literacy. Ideally students in occupational skills training should have been equipped with such skills as a pre-requisite for college acceptance, but since this seems to lack, the college takes it upon itself to conduct such preparation (NID report, 2010). This reflects on the quality of education that D/deaf learners receive in support of their construction of future careers and post school education and training (National Institute for the Deaf, 2010). The teachers of the deaf are not adequately equipped to intervene effectively; nor is the education system sufficiently accessible to deaf learners (Storbeck & Martin, 2010).

The results of a study conducted on the challenges of deaf education in South Africa coincide with international studies on challenges to educational advancement of the deaf. Amongst the challenges are the shortage of deaf adult role models for deaf learners as most deaf adults are not in white-collar occupations. This means that deaf learners have no one to look up to for career role modelling. South African Sign Language is not recognised as a language of Learning and Teaching and only a few teachers are fluent in South African Sign Language (Magongwa, 2010). Some crippling issues in the education of D/deaf learners in South Africa are highlighted through the case of the Sizwile School in Johannesburg. They allowed learners to enter the school system without the language development necessary for learning, the teachers were not equipped to teach D/deaf learners in South African Sign Language, the school context did not create opportunities for the success of the learners and there was a lack of emotional, social and even economic support for learners from their homes (Batchelor, 2010). However, enabling factors included having deaf teachers and deaf teacher assistance within the school, facilities for practical teaching and support therapists for language, remedial education

and a school nurse (Batchelor, 2010). This study, however, was conducted before South African Sign Language was recognised as a language of learning and teaching, but the effects of not recognising it earlier were a huge challenge for Deaf education in South Africa.

A study, conducted in Lesotho, on narratives of differently abled persons informing career guidance policy concluded that professionals, such as teachers and guidance practitioners appeared to have skills deficit in relation to providing support, guidance and counselling services to people with disabilities (Sefotho, 2013).

Both national and international studies reflect similar challenges in the education of people with disabilities. Common challenges seem to be more evident in the Southern countries of the world where colonialism has impacted negatively on the education of people with disabilities. The challenges seem to be similar, although the studies have taken different angles. The bottom line is that education for people with disabilities comes with many challenges. This information has been taken a step further to question whether these educational challenges could be a factor in the way careers are constructed by D/deaf learners. This case study explores the specific provincial status of education of D/deaf high school learners in relation to what the nation was doing through its policies.

2.5 Deafness and Education in South Africa

The vision of the Department of Basic Education in South Africa is that all South Africans should have access to lifelong learning, education and training opportunities. This, in turn, would contribute to improving quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic South Africa (Department of Basic Education, 2018).

The Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA), a democratic organisation of Deaf people, states that, through the years, deaf people have faced numerous challenges, including little access to education and almost no opportunity for gainful employment (Druchen, 2010).

DeafSA has fought for equity in education, employment and the recognition of cultural in South Africa. They maintain that most people who make decisions pertaining to education processes and support for deaf people have a wrong foresight and their own prescription about the future of deaf children. Consequently, they decide based on ideologies and not on proven evidence of research (Druchen, 2010). DeafSA believe there are significant disparities and opportunities for deaf learners in schools of the Deaf in South Africa in comparison to schools of the hearing . The Deaf sector has been discussing this matter with, parents, deaf teachers and deaf teachers' assistants (DeafSA, 2018).

History dictates that the literacy and mathematical performance of deaf learners has always been low. Schools for the Deaf often do not encourage deaf learners to participate in dynamic academic environments because they fear that students would achieve unsatisfactory outcomes. DeafSA is concerned that in the education trajectories for deaf learners, there is inconsistency in fairness of opportunities to test their scholastic knowledge in comparison with their hearing counterparts (DeafSA, 2018).

The delivery of the curriculum is unobjective and relies on available resources and skills and the schools decide on these. DeafSA enforces that necessary support to deaf learners must be given sufficiently and adequately to assist them to actively participate equally with their peers. This should be consistent and enhanced. A deep concern for DeafSA is the are

fragmented educational system of Deaf Education and lack of oneness in Deaf Education (DeafSA, 2018).

The Department of Basic Education, in its endeavours to remove marginalisation and to improve deaf education in South Africa, has developed and published a policy named “**The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for South African Sign Language (SASL) Grades R-12**”. This policy removes the barrier of education in home language for D/deaf learners. This is applauded as a step in the right direction by the Deaf education activists (Department of Education, 2014). The policy therefore introduces a new moment in time in the education encounters of D/deaf learners in South Africa (Department of Basic Education, 2014)

2.6 Career construction literature

“Career construction encompasses vocational choice, adjustment and development as a fluid process of making matches, making meaning and making it all matter to self and society” (Hartung & Taber, 2008).

At high school, it is critical that career decisions and aspirations be crafted, as this is the last stage of formal education before moving to tertiary education where career paths are chosen. It is important to explore career aspirations because together with memories and present experience, they contribute to shaping individuals’ careers (Brown & Lent, 2013). What one believe they can achieve guides what they choose for occupation together with what one achieves as required grades of education (Brown & Lent, 2013). Self-assessment of what one is capable of achieving guides their aspirational goals. The more one thinks they can achieve,

the higher the goal aspirations they will make and the more they will commit themselves to achieve those aspired goals (Bandura, 1991). People shy away from considering careers they perceive they are not capable of achieving, it does not matter how those may be lucrative (Brown & Lent, 2013). The level of education aspired to by learners in Israeli to achieve the occupation they expected to hold and the extent to which they believed they could succeed in certain jobs played a significant role in determining their career choice and development (Cinnamon, 2006). Literature reviewed in 1992 by Schroedel on deaf individuals' occupational expectations concluded that deaf persons had relatively low expectations, they indicated that blue-collar jobs were more suitable than did hearing persons (cited in Cinnamon, 2005).

A study by Brett (1998) in New Zealand to examine career development of high school adolescents with hearing impairments indicates the need to commence vocational programs (career awareness, career exploration, communication & decision-making skills) earlier. The above studies stress the importance of career aspirations in career construction and development.

Careers are constructed. They are crafted and do not unfold by themselves (Savickas, 2005). This construction is supposed to happen during school-going years when a learner is exposed to variety of career information to choose from. Exploring aspirations of deaf learners would assist in understanding their self-rating of abilities and their efforts in constructing those aspirations to become realisable in the future. Personal and career development classes at Iowa School for the Deaf in the United States of America, assists learners in their plans and makes them realistic and relevant to each of their capacities (Angeroth, 2009). This strategy seems to be lacking in South Africa, as the unpublished research presented by the National Institute for

the Deaf identifies a gap in skills for learners' learning to cope with skills training. This reflects on the high school preparation of learners for careers and post school education and training (National Institute for the Deaf, 2010).

There is a deficit in providing support, guidance and counselling services to people with disabilities and this may contribute to their unemployment even though they may have been through high school (Sefotho, 2013). In South Africa, with the revised National Curriculum Statement (NCS) policy of 2002, career guidance-related outcomes are in the Life Orientation curriculum from grade R to grade 12. Life Orientation is classified as one of four fundamental (mandatory) subjects. In grade 10 to 12 Life Orientation covers four areas, one of which is careers and career choices. Learners continue with their Life Orientation portfolio over these years and this becomes a concrete artefact of career development (SAQA, 2009).

A study conducted in Lesotho on narratives of differently-abled persons concludes that, professionals like teachers and guidance practitioners have inadequate skills for providing support, guidance and counselling services to people with disabilities (Sefotho, 2013). When teachers and guidance practitioners' skills are deficit in this area, one can expect no change in the careers of deaf learners.

It is agreed that career development is a hoped for part of attending school and there is a lot of evidence that a lot of career guidance interventions do help in this regard. (Hughes & Karp, 2004).

Career theorists and researchers highlight the need of growing career maturity, the skills to explore careers and positive attitudes for learners to make the school-to-work transition smooth and to get the best career results (Punch *et al.*, 2004).

It is necessary for deaf learners to take up careful career examination and planning to reduce possible pitfalls and to divert from the cycle of not getting jobs and getting low paying jobs that has been an identifier of the lives of a lot of deaf and hard-of-hearing people (Schildroth *et al.*, 1991). A study involving deaf persons, aged 16-19, in America using the Wide Range Interest and Opinion Test showed that, as a group, deaf students preferred manual activities over verbal learning areas; while in attitudes, deaf learners evinced lower levels of ambition and skills development than hearing students (Farrugai, 1982). The findings of these studies mirror observed states of deaf learners in the Eastern Cape. This warrants empirical investigation to unravel the underlying factors.

The kind of extracurricular activities, like choosing sport as a career for the deaf, is important as sporting activities are less verbal and oral. Extracurricular activities make possible ways for socialisation, open opportunities to share experiences, chances for achievement and avenues for distinction (Luckner & Muir, 2002). Involvement in activities that include sports, acting, making drawings, computing and taking photographs can help students to get and polish skills which would be useful for a lifetime. Part taking in extracurricular activities has a potential to assist in the development of time management, leadership, organisational, interpersonal and decision-making skills. Active participation can be linked to many positive outcomes in education, socially and developmentally. (McNeal, 1999). This study analyses how extracurricular activities contribute to career construction and support for deaf learners.

2.7 Parental support for career construction

Parental support and encouragement influences the vocational outcomes of their children (Bhattacharya, 2013). Parents and home environments are necessary role players in

contributing to career decisions made by children. Stringer and Kerpelman (2010) found that parental support of careers predicted career decisions, self-efficacy and career identity evaluation. What the parents think about the abilities of their children and their educational wishes have an impact on what their children wish to become and what they are able to achieve at school (Bandura *et al.*, 2001). Parental expectations and involvement are proven through research as predictors of better post school outcomes especially for children living with disabilities (Mazzotti *et al.*, 2015)

Collaboration of parents and education professionals in promoting high expectations of Deaf high school learners' career aspirations is important to successful transitions and career construction by Deaf learners (Pleet-Odle *et al.*, 2016).

2.8 Theoretical framing of the study

The literature reviewed above reveals that internationally, challenges in education for D/deaf people are common, especially for countries in the Global South. For countries in the Global North, with better resources, circumstances differ. Further, the literature reveals that support systems like parental and education system support are necessary for D/deaf learners to construct their future careers. This study is framed by the theory of career construction developed by Savickas (2005). The theory is based on important issues raised by a seminal theory of vocational development by Super (1957). It explains the interpretive and interpersonal process through which individuals impose meaning and direction on their vocational behaviour. Career construction theory addresses how the career world is crafted through individual constructivism and social constructionism (Savickas, 2005). It emphasises

that individuals create representations of reality but do not make reality itself. Careers do not unfold; they are constructed as individuals make choices that express their self-concepts and substantiate their goals in the social reality of work roles.

There are many theories around the concept of a career, for example, the theory of career development and career choice. The theory of career construction has been chosen for this study because it is relevant and its perspective of life themes enables the researcher to explore how high school learners construct their careers. This theory has stimulated the current study as its philosophical position and assumptions align with the interests of the researcher and will clearly guide the current process of knowledge generation.

The current study focuses on how deaf high school learners construct their careers. Career construction happens in high school, where ideas about aspired futures are shaped. Aspirations may not necessarily turn into careers but may be an ontology of thoughts about what kind of life individuals want to live in future (Young & Valach, 2004). Aspirations may develop into intentions and intentions into actions (Young & Valach, 2004). It is the connection of intentionality and action that is critical in career construction. It is intentionality that contributes to career construction (Young & Valach, 2004). Understanding the career aspirations of deaf learners represents in simple form the origination of career intentions, the beginning of career construction.

Adolescents mostly learn about possible careers and the world of work from their schooling experience, especially in more affluent communities outside of Africa (Hutchins & Akos, 2013).

Based on the developmental approaches to career choices, for example, Zunker, (1994), the career exploration stage of career development begins in the middle school years. During this stage, students discover their likes and dislikes, their capacities, aspirations, skills etc. This self-assessment then theoretically leads to appropriate decisions about career choices.

The second concept to be studied is the concept of support for career construction. The school system plays an important role of guiding and supporting learners to construct their careers. This guiding role occurs through curricular and extracurricular activities. The parents and family are also important contributors to career construction. Literature shows that parental support is vital in shaping the decisions of their children about future careers. The actual process of career construction is, however, largely dependent on the deaf learners themselves. It is guided by their aspirations, their capabilities and the support they get in making decisions about their future. These concepts are interlinked and important in the process of career construction and they warrant investigation.

Career construction may lead to better career choices for deaf people. The decisions the deaf learners make in high school determine their future careers. This falls under individual constructionism (Savickas, 2005). In the social constructionism paradigm, these decisions are dependent on the support and guidance they receive from parents and through the school system (Savickas, 2005).

This framework has been chosen to assist in interpreting the findings, and connecting this study to larger ideas, more general than the concrete particulars of this study (Casanave & Li, 2015). The framework further offers insight into what the researcher's thinks is going on with

thoughts about the phenomenon under study (Casanave & Li, 2015). Data is to be analysed and interpreted, using the concepts of this theoretical framing (Merriam, 2009). The findings are discussed in relation to existing knowledge, some of which is based on this theory (Merriam, 2009).

The philosophical position of the theory of career construction is social constructivism (Brown, 2002). The essence of the meaning of social constructivism is in people consciously constructing their reality, not becoming inactive beneficiaries of it (Brown, 2002). It assumes that all aspects of the universe are interconnected, and that it is impossible to separate people from their environments (Brown, 2002).

Human behaviour can only be understood in the context in which it occurs. As people learn their environment and engage in activities, they find their identities and define their situations (Brown, 2002). There are many theories around the concept of a career, for example, the theory of career development and career choice. The theory of career construction has been chosen because it is relevant to this study; its perspective on life themes enables the researcher to explore how high school learners construct their careers. This theory has stimulated the current study as its philosophical position and assumptions align with the interests of the researcher and can clearly guide the process of knowledge generation on the topic of study.

The following conceptual framework was drafted to visualise and pull together the theory and concepts studied (Casanave & Li, 2015). It is not a final product as the work is developmental and relationships among concepts and theory could change in the process of the study. It is a conception or model of what the researcher plans to study and shows relationships between concepts (Maxwell, 2012). The aim of this conceptual framework is to inform the rest of the

study design, to analyse and polish study aims, to craft practical and relevant research question, to choose suitable methods and to pinpoint possible validity threats to the findings and assumptions of the study (Maxwell, 2012). It justifies the research study (Maxwell, 2012).

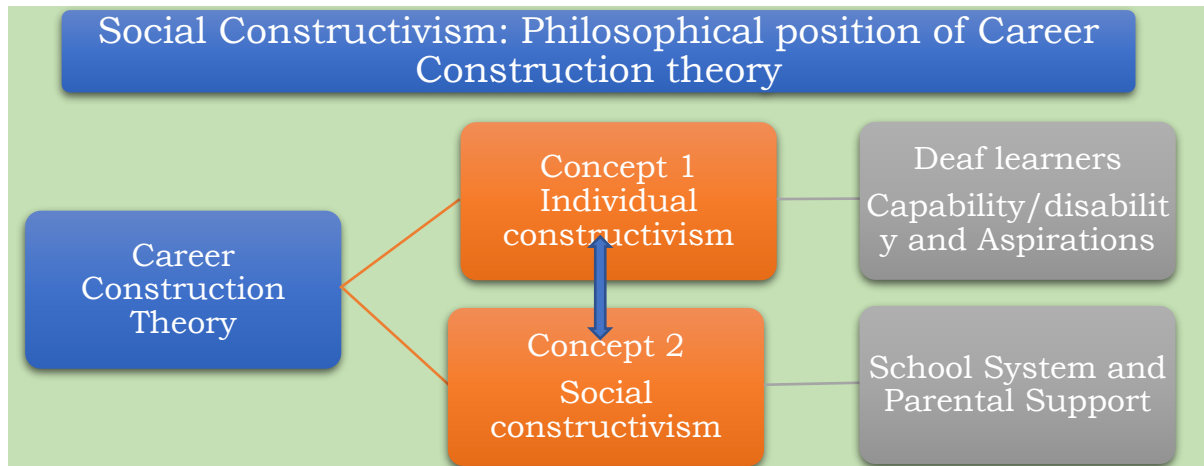


Figure 6: The researcher's representation of the conceptual framework of the study

The above conceptual framework represents the use of the career construction theory in exploring the two main concepts of the study; these provide the framing of the study. From the theory, the arrow shows the concepts that contribute to career construction. The concept of individual constructivism focuses on deafness and the capabilities of deaf learners and how they contribute to the career construction of the learners. The aspirations of the learners, which later develop into intentions, contribute to career construction in that, for every decision or action, there needs to be a starting point. In this study, aspirations are an indication of the purpose of studying - the intention to obtain certain careers in the future.

The concept of social constructivism focuses on the support and guidance by the school or Department of Education to career construction in that it provides a learning and equipping environment for career construction. The support and guidance of parents also contributes to

the career decisions of learners because parents motivate and fund their children in their career construction. The line from one concept to the other indicates that the concepts are linked to each other and are important contributors to career construction. The arrow between social and individual constructivism shows the connection between these two concepts, and that they always interact. For this study, this means that we can only understand the behaviour of the way careers are constructed by learners when we understand the social context which informs the way they construct their careers.

This study is further informed by the social model of disability. The social model claims that disability is socially constructed (Gabel & Peters, 2004). In this study, deafness disability is viewed from a structuralist paradigm.

2.9 The conclusion

The literature identifies a knowledge gap concerning career construction and supportive imperatives of D/deaf high school learners. The current study aims to amend this gap in deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape. The conceptual framework and the theory of career construction match the aims and objectives of the study and have been instrumental in answering the research question. In addition, it is worth noting that further studies have been reviewed and used in the discussion chapter of this research. They have been excluded from this chapter to avoid repetition as they have been more useful in the discussion of the results than in providing the literature background to the study.

Chapter 3

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a roadmap of how this study has been conducted is presented. The research paradigm including the ontology, epistemology, methodology and the methods used to get to the thesis, is described and explained in detail. The strategy or plan of action behind the choice and use of the methodology is presented (Yin, 2018).

Below a visual display, in the form of a steps, is presented. This shows how this chapter is organised and guides engagement with the methodology of the study (Verdinelli, 2013). The arrangement begins from the bottom step upwards.



Figure 7: Organisation of the Methodology chapter by the researcher.

3.2 The Philosophical approach

Adherence to empirical and explicit formal procedures of research is important and illustrating this philosophical approach is an attempt to show the way it functions in the current study (Yin, 2018). The philosophical approach provides a roadmap of the philosophical concepts and principles underpinning the study (Sefotho, 2015). The philosophical stance gives rise to a coherent research process that reflects on the basis, conduct and reporting of one's work (Dobson, 2002). The role of philosophy is to search for answers about the meaning of a complex phenomenon. The complex phenomenon in this study is that of infrequent appearance of deaf people in white-collar occupations, despite their having completed high school. It explores the way they construct their careers and how they are supported in this endeavour. The research aims at understanding the world, through one's experiences and those of others, thus referring to the social world and the experiences of people in that social world (Sefotho, 2015). The social world under study is that of deaf learners and their career construction. Below is an illustration of the philosophical crafting of this study.

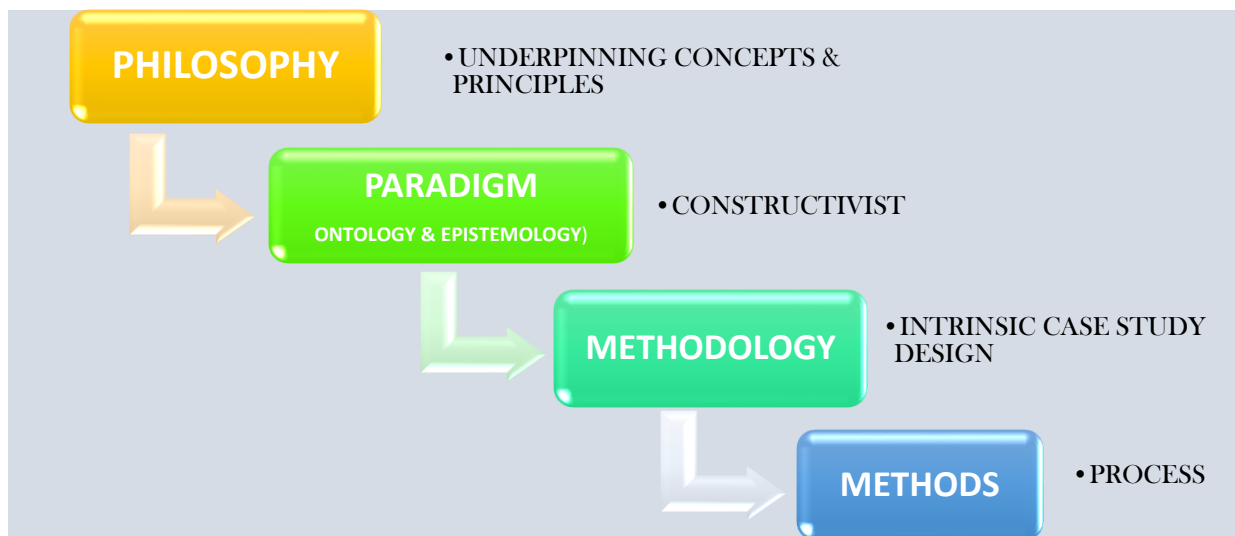


Figure 8: Researcher's representation of the philosophical approach to the study.

3.2.1 The paradigm of the study

The constructivist paradigm underpins this study as it explores social phenomena that require working with people and real-life experiences; reality is viewed as socially constructed (Mertens, 2005). The knowledge of the way careers is constructed by deaf high school learners and how are they supported towards this end is constructed through information from all participant categories and data sources (learners, parents, officials and policies), interpreted by the researcher and referred to a specific social context. Paradigms, being the highest manifestations of philosophy, follow a model of research by following a particular worldview (Sefotho, 2015). They show the researcher's way of understanding the reality of the world and studying it, reflect the assumptions, basic belief systems and theoretical framework of the researcher (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Adopting the constructivist paradigm was the most suitable choice for this study.

3.2.1.1 The ontology of the study

The ontology of the study was from multiple constructed realities, where deaf people in the Eastern Cape were observed by the researcher and seen not to be employed in careers requiring formal college or university qualifications, despite having been through high schools, where career construction generally begins. Researchers begin with assumptions about reality, how it exists and what can be known about it, whether these are implicit or explicit (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). The assumptions of the current researcher questioned the education processes or career construction processes of deaf learners and the supports available to them. The implicit assumption was that, the D/deaf people are not educated in a way that guides them to construct careers in white-collar occupations. That is the starting point of this research, it sought to study the reality of the world of D/deaf learners in the Eastern Cape Province (Sefotho, 2015).

3.2.1.2 The epistemology of the study

The epistemology of this study is constructivist as the literature, the researcher and participants have interacted and constructed the knowledge together. The epistemological position of constructivism was informed by the paradigm followed for this study (Kamil, 2011). The ontology of this study has guided its epistemological assumptions, by providing a starting point which led to wanting to know objectively, how things really are and how they really work against this assumed reality (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). The reflection on different claims of knowledge about the phenomenon under study and the production of knowledge about the

phenomenon became the epistemology of this study. It informed what can be known about the career construction of deaf learners, which might lead to their invisibility in the world of white-collar occupations.

3.2.2. Methodology

A qualitative methodology to research was adopted for this study (Creswell, 2007). The methodology of this study was informed by basis of the research paradigm (Sefotho, 2015). This qualitative research study identifies with post positivism which assumes that social reality is constructed differently by individuals in local situations (Castellan, 2010). The researcher's concern in this study is how individuals perceive their reality, which is an ontological issue (Castellan, 2010). This methodology has helped in generating an in-depth understanding of how deaf learners construct their careers and how they are supported in this. It gives detail and the 'story' of how careers are constructed in the Eastern Cape schools for the deaf. The qualitative methodology approach to research encourages participants to share their stories, to listen to their own voices and it reduces the dominant power relationship that often exist between a researcher and the participants (Creswell, 2007). The researcher and case interactions and transactions became a defining feature of this study's methodology (Mackenzie & Knipe 2010).

However, the weakness of this methodology is that it takes longer than other research methodologies to get an insight and understanding of the phenomena, and this makes it difficult to study a large population (Castellan, 2010). An advantage of this study is that the aim of the study was not to generalise findings to a larger population but to understand the phenomena.

The choice of a qualitative research methodology was affected by the research question which sought to know how careers are constructed and how D/deaf learners are supported to do this.

3.2.2.1. The design of the study

A case study design was adopted for this study, because the researcher had no interest in generalising the findings. The focus was to understand the phenomenon of career construction by D/deaf learners in the Eastern Cape and the supports available to them (Simons, 2009). This is an intrinsic type of a case study because the case is dominant and of importance as it affects the livelihoods of D/deaf learners' post schooling experience (Stake, 1995). The approach to the case study design incorporated views of Stake and Merriam by including in its design, a review of literature and a theoretical framework that guided the process of research (Merriam, 1998). A case study design was used because it allowed an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of how careers of deaf learners are constructed or developed in high schools in a real-life context (Simons, 2009). The case study explores and analyses how careers of deaf learners were developed in the Eastern Cape Province in 2018 and 2019. The findings provide a deep understanding of how they were constructed, and the implications of the study are mentioned. The researcher had no control over variables – she only reported what happened (Kothari, 2004).

This case study is descriptive. A descriptive case study design is a detailed approach to research where questions about the phenomenon concerned are compiled at the inception of the research (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016). This type of design starts with a descriptive theory that provides information on what is already known about the particular phenomenon, this enables the

researcher to clarify from the outset what will be included and excluded in the study (Mills & Ballantyne, 2016). It is characterised by the in-depth study of an individual or group of individuals or a particular situation over a defined period in a real-life context (Yin, 2012). It provides information that is rich in detail and informs the researcher about what is related to the phenomenon under study (Murphy, 2016). Descriptive studies do not search for relationships between variables or phenomena. However, they enable the researcher to describe the existing phenomena (Murphy, 2016).

3.2.2.2. Approach to the case

The approach to this case is aligned to both Stake's and Merriam's epistemology of constructivism and existentialism. The philosophical assumption of this approach is that, as much as the reality or knowledge of a case is constructed from the gathered data, it is expected that readers of the research may construct another reality or knowledge in addition to what the study offers (Stake, 1995). The researcher wanted to understand the meaning or knowledge constructed by people, with a special focus on deaf high school learners; and to explore how they make sense of their career construction and their schooling experiences in this context. This case is a study of people, in a specific context. It has unique distinctive attributes that are a combination of case attributes as mentioned by Stake and Merriam; it is "holistic", as it considers the interrelationship between the phenomenon of career construction and the context in which this occurs. It is "interpretive" as the researcher uses her intuition and interacts with the research subject. This is compatible with constructivist epistemology. It is "empathic" as it reflects the experiences of the learners (Stake, 1995). It is "particularistic" as it focuses on a

particular situation and phenomenon in the Eastern Cape Province. Lastly, it is “heuristic” as it illuminates the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 1998).

3.2.2.3. The boundaries of the case

Bounding a case study ensures that the aim of the study remains reasonable and achievable. By defining the boundaries of a case study, the researcher indicates clearly what will or will not be studied in the research project (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This includes the selection of the site, the participants and the period of the study. Several authors (Creswell, 2003; Stake 1995; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Baxter & Jack 2008) concur that bounding a case establishes clear boundaries for the study in terms of place, activity and context.

This case study was conducted in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, at two schools for the deaf in two districts, in 2018 and 2019.

The findings of the study, therefore, are specific to this region and findings in other places may be different. The attention of the study focuses on the particular and specific phenomenon of career construction and support of deaf high school learners. There might have been other variables or areas that raised interest but those are not emphasised, as the focus of the case is specific. The case study was further bound by the career construction theory and its concepts. This theory also guided the interpretation of the case study results.

3.2.3. The study sites

The study was conducted in two of the five schools for the deaf in the Eastern Cape. The schools (rural and urban) were purposefully selected to participate in the study. Selecting schools in two different regions of the province, with learners coming from deep rural locations

and a semi-urban location gave a good perspective on how resources are distributed and how careers are constructed and developed among deaf learners from different communities. The schools are managed in two education districts within the province; this further gave a good perspective on what is happening and how schools are managed in different school districts.

3.2.4. The study population

The study population included four participant groups: the deaf learners in high school (grades 10 -12), their parents, the teachers involved in the career guidance of the learners and members of the Department of Basic Education responsible for career guidance in deaf high schools.

3.2.5. The participants' inclusion & exclusion criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criterion were decided according to the stipulations in the table below.

Participant group	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Deaf high school learners	Registered in grade 10-12 classes of the schools under study. Must use South African Sign Language as first language, because this is the definition of Deafness in this study. Willingness to participate Interested in furthering their studies post school.	All learners who were not in grade 10-12. Learners who did not use South African Sign Language as their 1 st language Learners who are not willing to participate All learners who were not interested in furthering their studies post school.
Parents/Caregivers of deaf high school learners	Parents/ caregivers to deaf high school learners enrolled in the high schools under study. Willingness to participate in the study	Parents who did not have children in high school Parents/ caregivers who were not willing to participate in the study.
Teachers involved in career preparation of learners	Involvement in career preparation or teaching subjects specifically related to career preparation in the schools under study	All teachers who were not involved in career preparation subjects.

	Teachers had been at the school for at least two years, so they are familiar with the context.	Teachers who were not familiar with the context.
	Willingness to participate in the study	Teachers who were not willing to participate.
Department of Education district officials	Direct involvement in career development for learners, those who visit the schools and monitor the use of policies relating to career development of learners.	All officials who were not involved in issues relating to career development of deaf learners.
	Willingness to participate in the study	Unwillingness to participate.

Table 1: Inclusion & Exclusion criteria

3.2.6. Sampling

A purposive sampling approach, which is a type of non-probability sampling, has been applied in this study (Welman *et al.*, 2005). The researcher purposely collected analytical units such that the sample extracted is deemed to be reflective of the specific selected group of people (Welman *et al.*, 2005). The number of enrolled learners in the high school phase in both schools is about 150. Learners who met inclusion criteria and consented to participation were selected. Purposeful sampling was also used on teachers teaching subjects with content that includes career guidance, like Life Orientation. Parents/ caregivers of learners and Department of Education participants who were involved in the career guidance section of learners were selected. This is stakeholder sampling.

This strategy involved identifying who the major stake holders involved in administering or offering services or programmes and who might otherwise be affected by the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2009).

3.2.7 Data Collection methods

The data was collected using multiple methods. These included focus group discussions, individual interviews (face-to-face and telephonic) and document review. For this study, the multiple methods of data collection reduced and neutralised the bias and weakness of using the Sone data collection method (Creswell, 2013). Below is a table summarising how the data was collected:

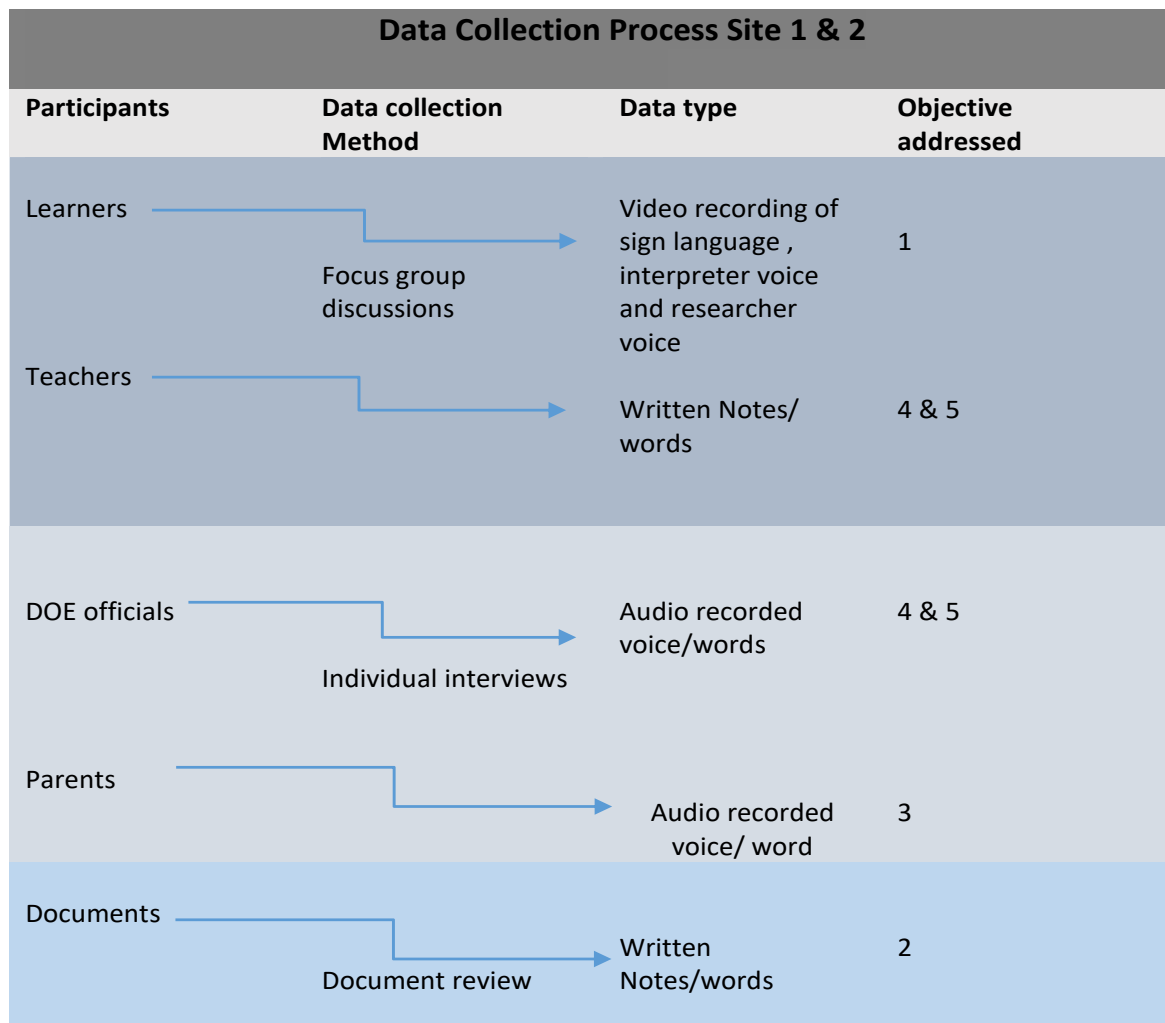


Table 2: Data collection process representation by the researcher

3.2.7.1 Focus Groups

Focus group discussions are relevant in this study because they are exploratory in nature (Morgan, 2014). Interactions in group discussions provided insight into the source of the current career construction processes and support of deaf learners in the Eastern Cape (Morgan, 2014). Small groups of learner participants were organised to engage in an informal group

discussion about their construction of future careers. The researcher, with guiding questions or topics of discussion, prepared a focus group schedule. The focus group discussions were conducted for learners and for teachers only. The schedule samples are attached as appendices.

The groups comprised of participants with common experiences (Marks & Yardley, 2004). For learners, the common experience was deafness, being in high school and using Sign Language as a home language. For teachers, the common experience was teaching in a school for the deaf and, for the most part, not having hearing loss and using spoken language (isiXhosa) as their home language, and English, as a teaching and learning language.

3.2.7.1.1 Focus groups for learners

Data was collected in two different phases from the learners, because of the distance between the sites, the numbers of learners enrolled in high school phase and the need for sufficient discussion times. Phase one was at the first site and phase two at the second site. For learners, discussions were conducted through an interpreter to bridge the communication barrier between the researcher who did not know Sign Language and used spoken language and the learners who used Sign language. The interpreters were full time Department of Education employees who assist teachers in the classrooms. They helped in focus group discussions. They are trained in interpreting between Sign Language and spoken languages. The person who interpreted the video recorded data was also a trained interpreter, born of deaf parents, but who can hear and speak. Sign Language was her home language. She understands Sign Language and has been interpreting for her parents all her life. She has a certificate in Sign Language interpretation. This gave credibility and authenticity to her interpretations.

3.2.7.1.2 Focus groups for teachers

There were three teachers' focus groups, two for those for teachers in high school at both sites and one for the experienced teachers who did not necessarily teach high school grades but who had experience in assisting deaf learners with any kind of career guidance. Most teachers could speak and hear, and, either colleagues or the school interpreters, interpreted for those who could not hear. Those who were deaf used teacher aids in the school.

3.2.7.2 Individual interviews

The individual interviews were with parents and the Department of Education district officials. Interviews allowed the researcher to gain insight into the participants' perspectives about career construction for deaf learners in high schools in the Eastern Cape. Semi-structured interviews were individually conducted. These were based on an interview guide that had a few broad questions on the research topic and probes to supplement them if respondents had difficulty in elaborating their perspectives (Marks & Yardley, 2004). Interview guides ensured uniformity of interview topics and questions, covering important areas during the interviews. The researcher based the interview questions on the research question and study objectives. The semi-structured interviews were voice recorded and notes were taken. This ensured that no information was missed during transcription (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996).

3.2.7.2.1 Individual interviews with parents

The parents were individually interviewed telephonically. They could not be brought together in focus groups because of the complex logistics relating to long distances in different towns and villages all over the province where they lived. They could not be assembled in a common place at a common time. Moreover, travelling to each homestead would require a lot of time and resources from the researcher. Telephonic interviews were the only feasible and economical option which could be conducted in the minimum time possible. Parents gave verbal consent when appointments were made before the actual telephone interview.

Semi-structured interviews with parents were arranged and telephonically voice (call) recorded and individually transcribed.

3.2.7.2.2 Individual interviews with officials

The Department of Basic Education officials were also interviewed individually. Interviews were conducted in boardrooms at the Department of Education premises in the two districts. These venues were convenient for the participants and suited the researcher. These interviews were conducted in person and audio recorded and individually transcribed.

3.2.7.3 Document Analysis

Document analysis provided in-depth qualitative information to understand the guiding prescripts of career construction and preparation for deaf learners. Documents reviewed and analysed included policies, white papers and guidelines that talked to career preparation or development of learners (Yin, 1994). Document reviews provided a window to a variety of

historical, political, social, economic and personal dimensions of the case, beyond interviews and observations. In addition, it gave a perspective on policy and practice. This information was useful in verifying and triangulating the information obtained during interviews and focus group discussions (Mills *et al.*, 2010).

3.2.7.3.1 The approach to document analysis

A systematic approach was used to analyse documentary evidence (Gross, 2018). The document analysis was conducted as a component of the larger qualitative study to triangulate findings gathered from other data sources (Gross, 2018). The information obtained from the documents was used to gain a greater understanding of the topic. Some public documents were obtained from the offices of the Department of Education and some were retrieved from the Department of Education website. They provided the primary data in the form of first-hand information on the content of the study.

Document Title & Author	Audience	Purpose	Date	Context	Source of document
Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) by Department of Basic Education (DBE)	Education officials, schools, educators	To guide planning for teaching, pacing and progression of learners	2011	The intent was to ease the administrative burden on teachers, to provide clarity on what to teach and assess. This provided clear guidance and consistency.	Education office hard copy & http://www.education.gov.za
Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive	Department of Education officials, all stake holders,	The purpose was to build an inclusive	2001	There was a need for changes to be made to the provision of	http://www.education.gov.za

Education and Training System by the Department of Basic Education (DBE)	disability activists	education and training system		education and training to respond and be sensitive to the diverse range of learning needs in special education and to build an inclusive education system	
National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) by the Department of Basic Education (DBE)	All Department of Education officials, schools, educators, learners, parents and education stake holders	The purpose is to provide a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programs for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in schools.	2014	The SIAS policy aims to respond to the needs of all learners in our country, particularly those who are vulnerable and most likely to be marginalised or excluded	DOE office hard copy/ https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/Specialised-ed/documents/SIAS-2014.pdf
National Policy pertaining to the Programme and promotion requirements of the national curriculum statement grades R-12 by the Department of Basic Education (DBE)	Department of Education officials, principals, public ordinary and special schools and independent schools which offer National Curriculum Statements grades R-12	The purpose is to outline the programme, progression and promotion requirements for grades R to 12	2013	Guidance for progression of learners	http://www.education.gov.za
Age requirements for admission to an ordinary public school by the minister of education	Education officials, schools, parents and all stakeholders	To guide ages of school entry and exit	1998	A need for age of schooling framework for schools	www.education.gov.za
South African Sign Language CAPS	Education officials, schools for the Deaf, parents, learners and all stakeholders	To recognise South African Sign Language as a choice for Home Language for d/Deaf learners	2014	A need for recognition of South African Sign Language as an official language of teaching, and assessment to reduce marginalisation of deaf learners in education.	www.education.gov.za

Table 4: Document data organisation

The guidance to selecting the reviewed documents was given by participants who provided titles or content of guiding documents, which they referred to during the discussions and interviews; these were recorded, searched and reviewed. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for documents was as follows:

Documents inclusion criteria	Documents exclusion criteria
Government documents guiding basic education	Documents not talking to basic education
National documents	School policies were not included
Created after 1994	Documents older than 1994
Mentioned or referred to by participants during interviews and interviews	Documents not mentioned

Table 5: Documents inclusion and exclusion criteria

3.2.7.3.2 Document sample management and organisation

After selecting and retrieving documents that met the inclusion criteria, the researcher developed a system for organising and managing them (Gross, 2018). This was arranged in the form of a table identifying the essential demographics of each document.

3.2.7.3.3 The document analysis methods

The review focused on the aims, content, intention, motive and significance of the documents (Gross, 2018). A content analysis of these was done on their relevance to people living with disabilities, especially Deaf people. The documents were obtained from the Department of Education, schools, websites and other relevant sources.

3.2.8 Data Collection tools and equipment

Semi-structured interview guides, focus group schedules and document review schedules were developed by the researcher, based on the objectives of the study. These were piloted to make sure they were effective. A sample of each has been attached in the appendices.

A free-standing video camera was used for recording the process of data collection with deaf learners with consent. This allowed recoding as Sign Language, a visual language, was used for these participants. The video recordings assisted in the correct interpretation and transcription of data.

An audio (voice) recorder was used to record conversations during telephonic interviews with parents and during face-to-face interviews with the Department of Education officials and the teachers.

South African Sign Language interpreter services were used throughout the data collection, transcription and analysis with Sign Language users. The interpreters signed confidentiality agreements drafted by the researcher. The content of the agreement covered the anonymity and confidentiality of the information obtained during the study.

A notebook was used to note and record important information as field notes for the researcher.

3.2.9 Procedure for data collection

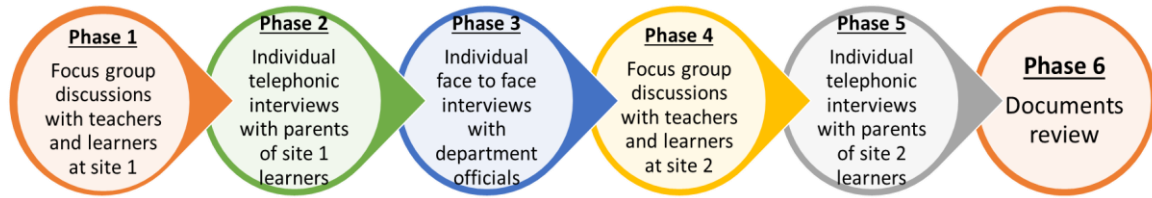


Figure 9: Phases of data collection process

Data collection was conducted in phases because of the multiplicity of participant categories. This was according to the plan of the researcher. However, there were some changes in the plans resulting from practicalities of the real research field. The initial plans, for instance, were to collect data from all the learners before the other participants but accessing all the learners at the initially desired times was not possible due to dynamic site circumstances. These caused delays in the planned data collection period and eventually affected the time period for completion of the study. The delayed access to learners affected opportunities to return to sites and get more information which might have helped clarify issues during data transcription and the initial stages of analysis.

The first step of data collection after receiving permission to conduct the study from the provincial Department of Education research unit, the district offices and school principals, was the focus group interviews with the teachers and learners successively in one site. Each of these group sessions took between one and one-and-a-half hours. The first site of data

collection presented no delays or challenges. The second site was slow to grant permission to enter the school to collect data, either from the learners or the teachers. The challenge lay with the school, as it had no principal and was under administration, which meant that the person who acted as principal was not from the school but from the district or provincial Department of Education . The administrator was new and familiarising himself with the environment and settling in to address the school challenges; this was reported by the administrator to be “an uncomfortable time” to allow someone from outside to interview staff and learners on any subject. The researcher had to respect the autonomy of the school and wait for a suitable time as promised in the ethical considerations. The permission was granted after nine months and that affected the time frames for the completion of the study. When the permission was granted, the process of data collection went smoothly and the participants were comfortable and willing to participate in the research as they consented freely.

The second phase of data collection was from the parents of learners from site one. This was carried out through individual telephonic interviews. This allowed for convenient times and the comfort of their own homes.

The third phase of data collection was from the Department of Education officials in the district offices. These were face-to-face interviews. These were conducted by appointment. The challenges were the busy schedules of the officials, so much so, that for one interview we had to leave the official’s office to use the boardroom because of constant distractions by staff members who wanted to consult with the official. The second official was interviewed during her lunch hour in the middle of a workshop because this was her only available time. The third official was interviewed later because of the tight schedule. The fourth official, who had

consented and made an appointment, could not honour the appointment and, as a result, was withdrawn from the interviews by the researcher. The researcher also sensed that it was not easy for the officials to speak on behalf of the Department, although the scope of research was within their field. However, once the interviews started officials were comfortable to talk about the issues of discussion because they were what they worked with every day.

The fourth phase of data collection was at the second site. This was the site with delayed access and took place 8 months after the first site data collection. At this site, the teachers' focus group discussions took place before the learners. The learners met a few days later. The learners were from grades 8 to 11, the learners in grade 12 were unavailable because they were preparing for their final matric examination and were not allowed to participate in the study.

The fifth phase of data collection was the individual telephonic interviews with the parents of learners from site two.

The sixth phase of data collection was the review and analysis of the official public documents and policies. The analysis of these took about two weeks. This was conducted at the researcher's office.

3.2.10 Data Processing

3.2.10.1 Data analysis, interpretation and management

Data analysis in was conducted on separate occasions and different methods were used to analyse data from the focus groups and the interviews (verbal data) and data from documents reviewed (textual data). Different approaches were used to analyse the multiple-sourced data

to make sense of it and to bring a joint meaning to it. Qualitative research makes it imperative to have a rigorous methodological method of data analysis to yield meaningful and useful results (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Data analysis included examining, categorising, tabulating or recombining the responses to address the research question (Yin, 1994).

Data analysis consists of reduction and reconstruction in a continuous process. In qualitative case studies, the interest is intrinsic. This means that the researcher aims to understand what is important from within, as opposed to from the perspective of outsiders (Mills *et al.*, 2012). Through examining their values , behaviours, comprehension, information, beliefs, feelings and experiences to estimate their creation of the phenomenon, qualitative data analysis seeks to assess how participants make sense of a particular phenomenon. (Maree, 2008). Analysis is a systematic process of choosing, classifying, arranging, contrasting, synthesizing and analysing the phenomenon of interest to provide explanations (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Before the actual analysis of the data, below is a table showing how the data was summarised in a data-organising table. This made it easy to keep track of the data and the plan of analysis, giving a little detail on the type of data and notes of each data set.

FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANISING DATA

Participants	Data source	Collection methods	Type of data	Data sets Prim.	Data analysis method	Comments/notes
Teachers in deaf schools	Focus groups	Discussions using a focus group discussion guide	Written notes and audio recorded	Primary source	Theory of career development and the objectives of the study	Three groups formed and interviewed (FET phase teachers & old teachers). All participants signed written consent forms
Deaf high school learners	Focus groups	Discussions using a focus group discussion guide	Written data notes and video recorded interviews	Primary source	Career construction theory and critical analysis used to analyse	3 group of learners in grade 8 - grade 12. They signed consent forms
Department of Education officials	Individuals	Interviews using interview guides	Written notes and voice	Primary source	Theory of career development and the objectives of the study	3 Department of Education officials were interviewed; they signed
Parents of deaf learners	Telephonic interviews	Interviews using interview guides	Voice records and written	Primary source	Theory of career development and the objectives of the study	22 Parents responded and verbally consented to telephonic interviews
Documents	Documents	Documents review	Written	Primary and secondary	Content analysis and objectives of the study	CAPS, DCAPS, SAIS, Admission requirements in special schools' policy,
Researcher	Documents	Note taking	Written	Primary source	Content and narrative analysis	Notes were taken

Table 6: Framework used for organising data

3.2.10.1 Focus groups and Interviews data analysis

A thematic data analysis method was used to analyse and interpret data from learners, parents, department officials and teachers. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing,

organising, describing and reporting themes found within a data set (Braune & Clarke, 2006, cited in Nowell *et al.*, 2017).

In translating for researchers who use both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, thematic analysis is relevant as it allows researchers who use multiple investigative techniques to interact with each other (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Thematic analysis is useful for summarising key features of large data sets as it offers a structured approach to handling data and produces clear, organised findings (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). This method of analysis was easily grasped and relatively quick to learn as it has few prescriptions and procedures (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). The following diagram shows the phases used in the process of conducting the analysis.



Figure 10: Phases of data analysis

The above was the cycle of all data sets, excluding the documents reviewed for which a different method of analysis was used. To get to the nitty gritty of the data in extracting meaning, the researcher embarked on three levels of analysis. Level one involved the cycle above.

3.2.10.1.1.1 Level one of data analysis

This level described the results in the said phases. Below is a table developed during level one of analysis. This table made it easy for the researcher to develop themes, after coding the transcribed data. A “theme” is the main product of data analysis that yields practical results in the field of study (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016). Meanings are conveyed in terms of themes and their related subdivisions. Themes are attributes, descriptors, elements and/or concepts. They are implicit topics that organise a group of ideas and enable the researcher to answer the study question. Themes reflect a thread of implicitly unfolded embedded meaning, discovered at the interpretive level, and features of the participants' personal understanding (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2016). They shows the process of analysis. This table was generated for all data sets analysed using the thematic method.

CATEGORY	CODES	INTERPRETATION OF THE MEANING OF CODES			THEMES
Career choices	Teachers, nurses, hostel supervisors, sports coach/ managers, retail (KFC, Checkers, Spar), police officers, hair dressers, computers, builders, cleaners, school principals, air hostesses, laundry workers, security services, miners, water providers	They have different aspirations, for both professional and unprofessional careers; Their intention is to improve the lives of deaf children and the lives of Deaf community members; They want Sign Language awareness and use; They want better education for deaf children.			Career aspirations
Career realities	The way we are taught is bad; Our teachers speak with their mouths; They write on the board; They move their lips;	No, they realise their dreams for white-collar jobs may not come	They blame the system or method of education(teaching);	Although they have white collar job aspirations, they acknowledge the limitations of the education system and	

There is no sign language and we are deaf; We do not know English words are difficult we do not understand; We are forgetful people; We do not understand anything.	true. Reasons stated include: - Lack of proper communication language, Lack of subject content knowledge and understanding.	They identify their inadequacies in terms of their academic competence.	their personal inadequacies. They also acknowledge the strength of their being gifted with skills and talents
Yes We do play sports We can if we can continue to try I can cook I know someone who works there Maybe we can pass matric	Yes, white-collar jobs can be achievable for the following reasons: - We have potential to excel in sports, cooking, pass matric, have role models in retail industry etc.	Those who think career realities can be achieved are basing this on their interest and potential in menial jobs and extra-curriculum activities like sports. Their basis is also their potential in skills and natural gifts	

Table 6: Level 1 Data analysis process for learners

The objectives of the study were utilised to report on the themes developed for each data set. Data sets were matched to each of the four objectives of the study. This made it easy to interpret the results according to themes under each objective. This level of analysis was data driven. The process of matching themes to objectives helped to transition from level one of analysis, which escribed the results to the second level of analysis, which was more interpretive. This approach was useful to the researcher, a novice in research, because she could keep track of her research objectives as she kept matching them with the emerging themes.

3.2.10.1.2 Level two of data analysis

Level two analysis is the level that introduces colour and a human element to the study. It is what brings the results alive, because at this level, the researcher describes under each objective the people who create the data codes. It brings to light the learners who have dreams and

aspirations and are trapped in a system that makes them incapable of constructing careers and invisible in their aspired career spaces. It brings to light the parents who have ambitions for their deaf children but are entangled in a context that limits them to playing the expected parental supporting role for their children's careers. It brings to light the challenges faced by both the teachers and the Department of Education officials who cannot support the learners as they should, according to government prescripts.

Level two of data analysis is when sense is made of the data and it is evaluated. This level brings data to answer the critical question of the study: **“How are careers of deaf high school learners constructed and how are they supported towards this?”** It explains why deaf learners are not in white-collar careers. It is field driven. The sense making is done by interpreting the codes and listening to the deeper meanings of the participants through their words and combining this interpretation with the participants themselves and the context in which they utter those words.

The researcher has included pictures, which are relevant in supporting the interpretation and sense making of data at this level of analysis. These pictures represent the discussions and help to match the words to the people who said them. In the first picture, the learner who is standing up was contributing to the discussion, as is the second learner from the left in the second picture. The picture in the second row is the researcher taking notes during one of the discussion phases. All these helped during the second phase of data analysis.



Picture 1: Photographs taken at data collection used in level 2 analysis of voices and participants

3.2.10.1.1.3 Level three of data analysis

This is the final level of data analysis and interpretation. It is the final abstraction where data is compared to the original conceptual framework, theory of career construction and literature. It involves theoretical analysis of data. This level develops the theses and points out new information from the study. It involves extracting big issues from the study. In level three of data analysis, the themes, their meaning and the participants from level one and two, are brought together in dialogue. These are analysed further using the theory of career construction and a conceptual framework. The information from this analysis is developed into a thesis. The

intention is to compare the original theoretical framework with the new information so that suggestions or implementations can be considered in the future.

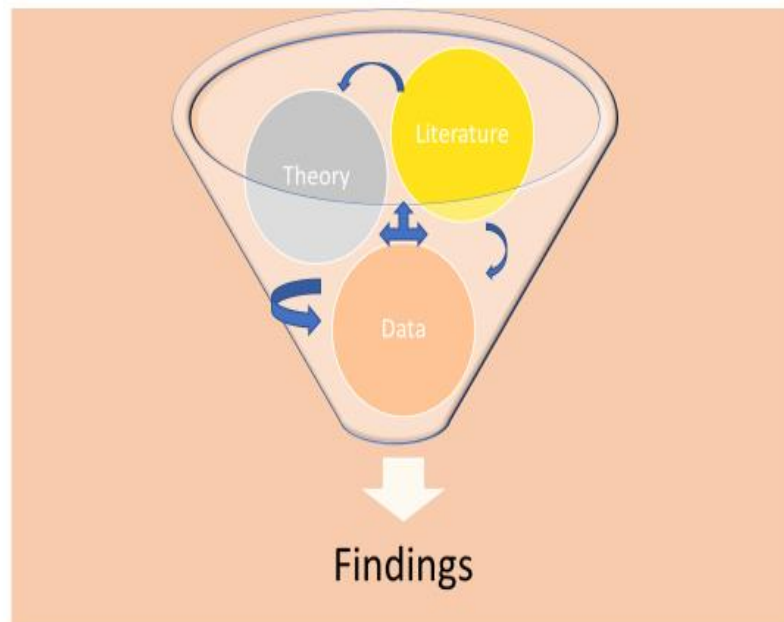


Figure 11: An illustration of level 3 synthesis of data analysis

3.2.10.1.2 Document review data analysis

Document analysis provides in-depth qualitative information on understanding the guiding prescripts on career construction and preparation of learners, and especially of deaf learners. Documents reviewed and analysed include related public documents like policies, protocols, white papers and guidelines that speak to career preparation or development of learners (Yin, 1994). The document review provides a window to a variety of historical, political, social,

economic and personal dimensions of the case, beyond the interviews and observations (Mills *et al.*, 2010). The review focuses on the content, intention and significance of the documents. A critical analysis of these was done for their relevance to people living with disabilities, especially Deaf people. Most documents were readily available for public view on the Department of Basic Education website and some were requested from the Department of Education officials, schools and other relevant sources.

The document review rationale was for the triangulation of information to verify facts and strengthen the rigour of the study, for informing the researcher before interviewing experts in the education field, to help uncover meaning, develop understanding and to discover insight into issues relevant to the study. This information was also used to supplement research data. (O’Leary, 2014).

The document review method of data collection was in line with objective number two of this study: to critically review policies and guidelines from the Departments of Education that address career development of Deaf learners.

The data from the documents was analysed using content analysis. This method emphasises key points or value statements and shows the importance of key narratives surrounding the topic (Hamilton & Corbet-Whittier, 2013). It is a method that is empirically based, its system is exploratory and purpose is to infer (Krippendorff, 2013). Three levels of analysis were followed in the document analysis: these were skimming through the documents, reading them for understanding and meaning and interpreting them for their significance to the study.

3.2.10.1.2.1 Level one of document analysis

The first level involved skimming through the documents provided by the Department of Education via their website, schools and district office printed copies. The skim reading

strategy was a quick search to get an overview of the documents in order to decide whether they suited the purpose of the study or not (North *et al.*, 2016). Following this, the most relevant documents were selected and organised as shown in table 2 above. The documents were further analysed for their content and relevance as shown in table 3 below. The tool, in the form of a table for document analysis was developed by the researcher. B below is an example:

Title	Aim/Intent	Content	Significance
Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)	The aim of this document is to guide teaching and assessment in schools.	CAPS details what should be taught in schools by teachers, in terms of annual teaching plans and the assessments. It was developed, based on the National Curriculum Statement, to guide in teaching in terms of selecting topics and assessment. CAPS tries to link teaching and assessment. Its audience is mainly teachers, and district officials who have to make sure it is being implemented. The purpose of this curriculum is to establish that learners get and use knowledge and abilities in ways that are relevant to their lives. The curriculum supports awareness of local contexts in this regard, while being attentive to global demands.	This document is relevant to this study because it details the issues of curriculum and assessment, which are core issues in methods used by the Department of Education and the teachers to support career construction of learners. It talks about the content of what is taught in schools and that which guides learners towards making career choices.

Table 8: Document Analysis procedure followed by the researcher

3.2.10.1.2.2 Level two of document analysis.

Secondly, the documents were read and analysed for their content. Content analysis is defined as the analysis of the manifest and latent content of a body of communicated material through

classification, tabulation and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to ascertain its meaning and probable effect (Krippendorff, 2013) Content analysis involves analysis of texts for their meaning in their contexts (Williams & Wittaker, 2014). This process examines what the documents are about and how the content relates to the research question. Further, it looks at their original purpose and intended audience.

3.2.10.1.2.3 Level three of document analysis

The final stage of document analysis involves the interpretation of the meaning of the documents and their contribution to the research question; the relevance of documents to the research problem or purpose and whether they fit in the conceptual framework of the study or not. This involved the interpretation of the significance of the documents in the study. This stage included critical policy analysis where three stages of critical policy analysis were used to bring to the attention of the reader the global theories about the concepts of D/deaf education, the national policies that guide the implementation of global theories and the practices at service ground level (Rata, 2014).

3.2.11 Data representation

After the data was analysed, findings were presented in various ways like tables, smart art diagrams, graphic posters and comics, photographs and in text (Verdinelli, 2013). The results were arranged as per study objectives and their thematic representation. Direct quotations were extracted and put into narratives. The data representation facilitated both visual and mental understanding of the concepts under study and brought meaning to the research process and findings.

3.2.12 Data management system and storage

Data was stored under lock and key in the researcher's office and in the computer with safety and privacy passwords. This office was private; access was only through the researcher. This protected the data and stored it safely. Names of participants were never mentioned, and they were not noted on the data collection tools, where codes were used to ensure the privacy and anonymity of participants.

3.2.13 Case Study Validation/Rigor

In the context of the case study design, the following issues were considered to ensure the rigour/validity of the study:

The researcher received the assistance of Sign Language interpreters who were independent and not part of the interview participants in order to eliminate bias in the interpretation of the responses and results. Another Sign Language interpreter, who was not part of the Department of Education staff, verified the interpreted signed data. This interpreter was not part of the data collection process and was not in the room for the data collection. This increased the reliability of the translation from Sign Language to IsiXhosa. The data was later translated to English by the researcher. The transcription was made by the researcher to strengthen its reliability. The option of using transcribing software could not be used for creating the transcripts because of the challenges with the language used by the participants and the accent of the English used could not be correctly picked up by the available English transcribing software. The companies who transcribe for researchers also could not assist because of the isiXhosa language used by most participants, which was not familiar to them, so, as the researcher understood isiXhosa

and English, she had to make the transcripts and language translations for the participants who used both isiXhosa and English. This required an enormous amount of work in preparing data for the analysis. However, the process provided a learning experience for the researcher and her preparing her own data for analysis strengthened the reliability of the study.

Data was triangulated by using multiple sources of data (focus groups, interviews and document reviews). As the data was being collected from different participant groups, different groups verified some issues and this strengthened the reliability of the information received from different participant groups: this was the triangulation of the information. Moreover, comparing responses from different data collection site participants, and finding that they coincided, strengthened the reliability in identifying important issues being investigated through the case study (Bricki & Green, 2007).

A chain of evidence was maintained (all video tapes, audio recordings, field notes and documents) to increase the reliability of the study and to provide an audit trail. An external observer would be able to follow the derivation of evidence from the initial research question to the ultimate case study conclusion (Yin, 1994). The transcriptions, the rough work, the tables, etc. are all evidence of the work that went into this study and were kept for reference and review whenever necessary. This strengthens the legitimacy and originality of this study.

3.2.14 Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Cape Town's Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. Once ethical clearance was granted, the researcher requested permission from the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Basic

Education's research office and school principals of the participating schools to conduct the study. Ethical clearance letter, the proposal, the consent and assent forms were amongst the document pack submitted when requesting permission to conduct the study, as this pack clearly explained the aims of the study to the permitting bodies.

When the Department and the schools had granted permission, in writing, consent was requested in writing from all candidates willing to participate in the study and who met the study inclusion criteria. Underage learners were unable to sign the forms themselves and consent was requested from their parents who signed the assent forms. Once the responses were received from participants, the researcher commenced with the data collection. Although some data was collected in focus groups, consent from participants was requested individually.

The purpose of the study was explained both in print and verbally to all participants, school principals of the selected deaf high schools and the Department of Basic Education.

Justice was considered, as participation was voluntary. All views of participants were respected and treated as important and valuable.

Participants enjoyed autonomy as informed consent was requested in writing from the participants before their taking part in the study (Bricki & Green, 2007). For deaf learners who might be considered vulnerable because they were younger than 16 years consent to participate was requested from their parents/ caregivers.

Confidentiality was kept as the names of participants were kept anonymous throughout the study. Coding of participants was done when necessary and real names were never divulged in this study.

The benefit of participating in this study was the information about possible careers gained by the learners and their parents/ caregivers. They obtained the information from group discussions and other participants' views of careers and becoming aware awareness of the need to take part in their own career construction.

The risk of taking part in this study was very low. The views of participants were all valued and kept confidential.

The cultural values of the Deaf community were observed and respected throughout the study. This was done by being cautious about the language of communication and being aware of Deaf culture and respecting its principles, especially with regard to issues of deafness and disability.

Chapter 4

4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings of focus group discussions with deaf high school learners, teachers of deaf learners and individual interviews with parents of deaf learners, Department of Education officials and the analysis of the Department of Education policies. Discussion of the findings is found in the next chapter. The following diagram emphasises D/deaf learners as the central focus of the study and summarises the way the findings are organised in this chapter.

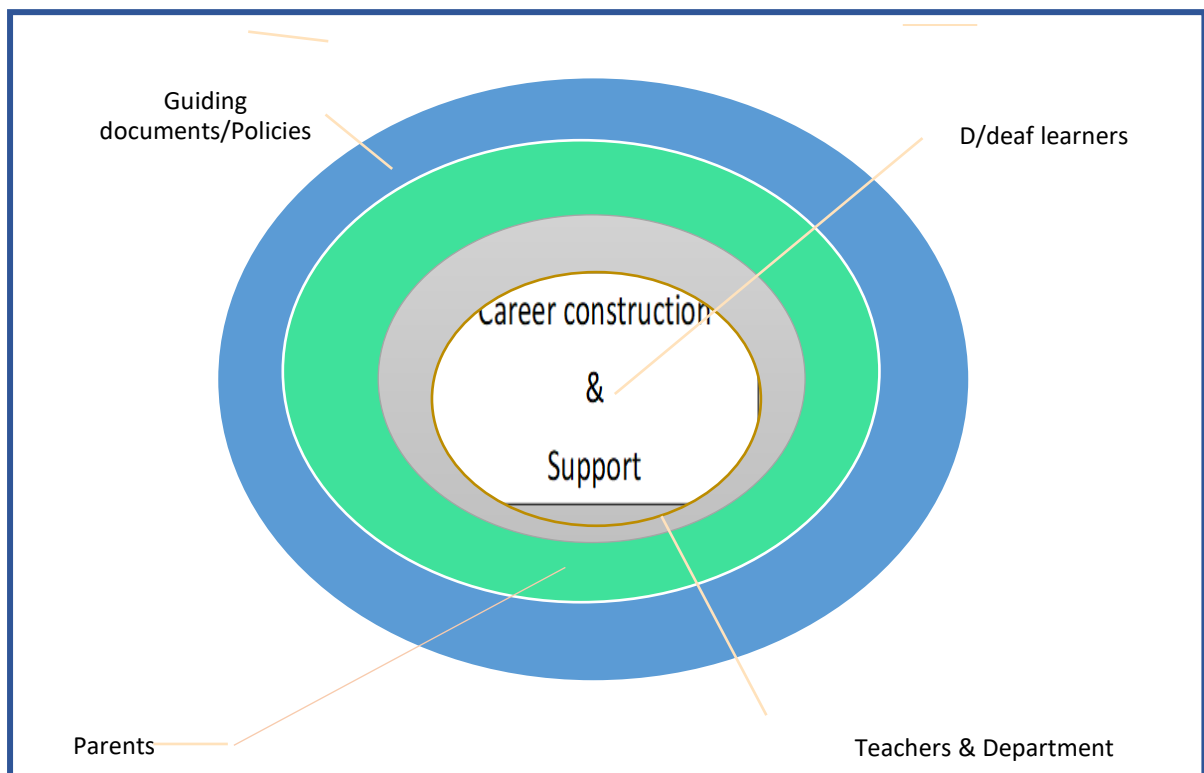


Figure 12: Career construction & support of D/deaf learners' representation as central to the findings of the study

The findings presented in this chapter respond to the research question, the aim and objectives of the study. The research question is, **“How do D/deaf high school learners construct their careers and how are they supported?”** The aim of was to explore and critically analyse the career construction of deaf high school learners and the supporting strategies provided to them to achieve their career aspirations in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. This study has four objectives, listed in chapter one, which seek to meet the aim of the study and to answer the research question.

The findings are presented in the form of stories narrating the background of each participating group and the themes and subthemes extracted from the raw data of the transcripts. Towards the end of the chapter, the findings are further presented as responses to each of the four objectives by pulling together themes and synthesising their meaning for each objective. These findings are structured in such a way that the case under study is revealed and understood. They provide a deep understanding of how careers of D/deaf learners are constructed and have, at the end, recommendations from all participants who contributed to the study. The researcher had no control over variables and has only reported what happened during the process of the study (Kothari, 2004).

The concepts of this research were framed by the theory of career construction. Throughout the study and the process of extracting these findings, this seminal theory was used as a guide and had been a point of reference during the interpretation of data. Although the study has not tested the theory, it helped as a backdrop to understand the cases and to answer the research question. Findings extracted using thematic analysis are presented as themes and those

extracted using content analysis are presented as such. To make sense of these findings and for coherence, the findings are also presented according to each objective. In the objectives, the views of each participant group are communicated so that there is a cross reference of ideas. If any participant group had no input in that particular objective they do not appear in the findings.

To the researcher, these findings represent the personal truth of the participants, they vividly show the case explored. The researcher invites you to engage with her as she presents the findings. The first presentation represents the deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape. They are the main participants or actors in this study, hence, placing them at the centre of the conceptual framework. Learners are the ones who are supposed to construct future careers with support and education. They speak to the first objective of this study.

4.2. Objective one

To describe the career aspirations of deaf high school learners, their efforts towards career construction and their perspectives on how they are supported to construct them.

To meet the first objective of this study the following theme and sub- themes were constructed from the data obtained from the learners. The following diagram represents a summary of these:

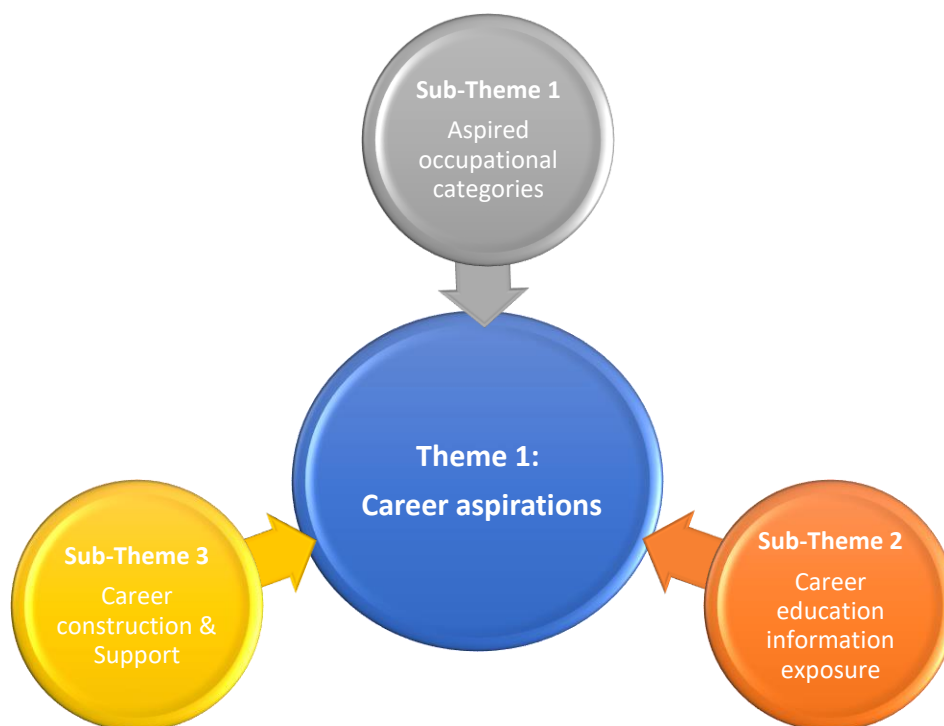


Figure 13: Theme and sub-themes from data from learner focus group discussions

4.2.1 **The learners**

The voices in this theme are those of the learner participants. They are introduced in the paragraphs below, before unpacking the contents of the theme. The learners are the focus of the whole case study; they are the case presented through this study. The illustration below is a representation of D/deaf learners with career aspirations for their future. This illustration represents the impression that the researcher gained when consolidating the findings of this part of the study. The blue shadow represents the male learners and the pink represents the female learners. The amplified plug over their ears represents that they are D/deaf. The dark blue smoke-like cloud represents their dreams and aspirations and the stars represent some of

their aspired careers. They are sitting on a road-like surface which represents their continued journey to the future.



Figure 14: A graphic illustration of career aspirations of D/deaf learners.

The career aspirations of D/deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape were heterogeneous. This is not uncommon for any group of people, individuals rarely want the same things, interests and choices always differ from individual to individual. In constructing their careers, these learners face challenges which are both systemic and personal.

The total number of learners who participated was 38. This number includes both sites of study. These learners all met the inclusion criteria of the study. They all had career aspirations and understood the content of the study after it was explained to them. Below, are the pictures taken during data collection; they were taken with permission from the learners and the schools.



Picture 2: A collage of photos taken during focus groups discussion with learners from both sites.

As the discussions progressed, I observed the body language and the enthusiasm of the participants, as I knew very basic Sign Language. The participants were very vibrant, interested in the topic of discussion and actively participated in the group discussions. They seemed especially interested in education and in participating in social and economic activities in future.

They understood the content and concept of the discussions. Their responses were truthful, personal and not influenced by external factors, as the sessions were unplanned and spontaneous. They interacted with each other, explaining the questions within the groups for those who did not understand the topic of discussion or the questions. They told each other to

wait for the one speaking as the discussions went on and this gave everyone who had something to contribute a chance to state his or her view. They seemed to be dependent on each other for information and interpretation. They paid attention to both the researcher and the interpreter to cross-reference that they were saying the same thing. When their aspirations for future careers were discussed, the girls seemed to be more ambitious, as they aspired for more professional careers than the boys did. There was a sense of uncertainty as well, as to whether their aspirations could become reality when they considered the circumstances of their education. As the discussions grew deeper and issues about their education came to forth, and they realised that the issues were serious, the mood of the discussion changed and became tense and some became participants became reserved. They were not as happy and energetic as they had been when the discussions started. To the researcher, this meant that the reality of the possibilities of their aspired careers was sinking in. They seemed to realize that, what they wished for might not be realistic, or might be out of their reach, given the circumstances of their education. Their career dreams versus the reality of the situation was sinking in. It seemed as if they realised that, in fact, their aspirations could only be lived as dreams and might not be brought to light. This interested me and drew me to a deeper analysis of the words and phrases they used to describe the realities of their education and career construction.

4.2.1.1. Theme 1: Career aspirations

The first objective sought three things in exploring the career aspirations of the learners: a description of their career aspirations, their efforts to construct their careers and their perspective on the support they were getting towards constructing their careers. The responses of learners were divided into sub-themes, which responded to the objectives of the study. The

sub-themes were the aspired occupational categories, career education and career support. The question sought to discover the occupations or jobs they aspired to so that these could be categorised and information on the occupational choices could be categorised into larger occupational categories or general categories. These larger categories would be white-collar occupations or blue-collar occupations (Anjum & Pavez, 2013). White-collar occupations refer to professional occupations and occupations requiring university or tertiary qualifications. Blue-collar occupations refer to occupations that do not require university or college qualifications (Anjum & Pavez, 2013). The white-collar occupation category includes professional and managerial jobs like accountants, bankers, attorneys, clerks, real estate agents, etc. and the blue-collar occupation category includes jobs like cleaning, assembly line workers, maintenance and laundry workers (Scott, 2013). Exploring these categories would give an idea of which career streams were of interest to each group of deaf high school learners.

4.2.1.1.1. Sub-theme 1: “I want to become...” Aspired categories of occupations

Career aspirations of deaf high school learner participants were in both the white-collar and blue-collar categories of occupations. The following are direct quotations of what some of the learners said they wanted to become:

“I want to become a teacher and teach children. I want to be a teacher because I want to teach young children, young deaf children.”

“I want to become a teacher, and teach children, and teach them Sign Language well.”

“I want to work in hospital; I want to be a cleaner in hospital.”

“I want to become a social worker and help children who come with problems.”

“I want to work in public works and be a builder.”

“I want to be a typist and learn about computers.”

“I want to be a cleaner.”

“I want to be a cleaner as well.”

“I want to be a police officer and catch lawbreakers”.

“I want to work at SPAR supermarket, I want to look there and be a manager.”

“I want to be a school principal and control the learners. I want to control and expel those who smoke and do bad things; I will expel them because that is not what is needed by the school”

“I want to control sports and be a sports manager.”

“I want to be a hostess in the airplane.”

“I want to work in the laundry.”

“I want to go to university and learn computers.”

“I want to be a security officer and be a manager of security services.”

“I want to work in the tanks, the JOJO tanks, so I can provide water in schools.”

“I want to work in the mines, I want to get underground and dig gold.”

“I want to be a policeman so I can catch those who break the law.”

The reasons for the aspired occupations included wishes to improve the lives of deaf children, the lives of Deaf community members, Sign Language awareness and use and better education for deaf children.

When asked whether they thought they would achieve their aspired future careers or what they wanted to become, the responses again were in two categories: those who thought their aspirations were achievable and those who thought they were not achievable. Those who thought they were achievable stated that their reasons were their potential to excel, especially in sports, their ability to cook, their possibility of passing matric and further their studies and some said that it was because they knew people who worked in those fields of interest. When observing these responses, those with positive responses were those with career aspirations mainly in blue-collar occupations and in extracurricular activities, like sports.

Those who thought their aspirations might not be achievable stated reasons related to communication between themselves and teachers as a major barrier to their education. They further based this on their self-reflection where they acknowledged their inadequacy in terms of academic performance. They claimed that they were being pushed to next grades even if they had not gained knowledge in previous one. They knew because sometimes their reports did not show their true ability, they were not a true reflection of what they knew.

“We are being pushed, reports do not show our true ability, and they are not a true reflection of what we know,” said one of the learners.

They also received positive affirmations from their reports. They seemed to be dependent on their school progress reports for positive or negative affirmation of their academic performance and progress.

“Yes, we are passing, sometimes we are told we have failed but we still ask to see what the report says to make sure that we are not being pushed to the next grade.”

The learners aspired to occupations in both white-collar and in blue-collar categories. From this sub-theme, the most outstanding reason that emerged that threatened future occupations for these learners was the language barrier between the learners and the teachers.

The next sub-theme covers the career information exposure of deaf high school learners.

4.2.1.1.2. Sub-theme 2: Career education information exposure

This sub-theme emerged from the codes and categories that responded to the guiding question on careers' talks in school, especially focusing on the content of Life Orientation (LO). The literature claims that Life Orientation includes the, curricular strategy and is a vehicle for career education in South African schools.

The responses around this sub-theme indicate that the learners were not adequately exposed to career education during LO. The reason given for this was the language barrier between learners and teachers. They claimed that the teachers just wrote on the board without explaining anything and that they did not understand the content of the subject. One of the learners said, *“Yes, we do LO it is important because it talks about our life, but we do not know anything*

about it, there is no teaching of it, teachers write on the board, we forget the content, it is just small work written we do not understand LO.”

They seemed to have a vague idea of the subject because they mentioned that it was important because it talks about their lives, but were not sure exactly what it was all about. They were also sure that career information was never shared in this subject in school. *“No, we talk about LO as usual but not about careers.”*

“Never, we do not talk about that, nothing like that in LO, we are getting nothing from LO, we do not even talk about what we want to become when we are older.”

They got a little exposure to careers through career exhibitions when they were in grade 12 and that was already late and was not helpful to them.

“Yes, we went there yesterday but that thing is late, it is late for us. We got there late and we do not even know the reason why we were late. There was a career exhibition yesterday but we were late.” This learner was referring to a recent event where they had been taken to a career exhibition, but they unfortunately arrived late at the venue and they did not benefit from the event.

In addition, they only had access to computers where they searched for career information when they were in grade 12. *“No, we do not; it is only grade 12 who have access to computers.”* However, one learner who had the advantage of a computer at home did some research on what interested him; he said he had computer access at home. *“At our homes,”* he said, and he further explained saying, *“From my side I get most support from home, I cannot say I am getting any support from the school.”* Almost all of the learners in another group

agreed when one said, ***“Yes, here at school there is not much support and help, unlike at home.”***

Some learners were doing a little research on their careers of interest. ***“Yes we have started”***, was a response from most of them at one site when they were asked if they are doing any research on the careers of their choice. They further explained that they looked in books and on computers. Some did no research. About three of them agreed when one said, ***“No, we do not do that, we do not ask about that.”***

They also mentioned that they were not sure whether the subjects they were taking in school would allow them to follow the career streams they aspired to in future. ***“No, we do not know those subjects.”***

To the researcher, this information meant that the deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape were not adequately exposed to career information. It seemed that there was very little, if any, form any of formal career education, guidance or counselling that they received at school. This was according to the information obtained from them. The reason for this, was also related to language barriers and inadequate resources. However, despite the said challenges, some learners tried to find career information on their own, which shows that at whatever level, they are making an effort to construct careers for the future.

The next sub-theme talks to the activities learners engage in in trying to build their aspired future careers and the kinds of support that they receive towards this.

4.2.1.1.3. Sub-theme 3: Career construction and support

This sub-theme emerged from the discussion about what the learners were doing themselves to construct their careers and whether they thought they would achieve their aspired careers. A few learners indicated that they conducted computer searches when they were at home during school holidays, those with access to computers and data when at home. They also mentioned that they looked in books and magazines and that they could see and read about what they wanted to become. This research was not guided, they just looked at what interested them, not really aiming at meaningful research for potential careers. That is what they engaged in an effort to construct their careers.

The learners who were involved in sports mentioned that they played at district, regional, provincial and national levels.

“Yes, I do play, in the district, the provincial and even in national.”

“Yes, we do play sport.”

“Yes, we play provincial games.”

“Yes, we can if we can continue to try.”

They said when asked if they thought they could play professional sports. They hoped to be picked as they played at higher levels and to build their careers in sport that way. Although they mentioned sport management as an aspired future career, in the discussion they seemed to be thinking about playing sport more than management or administration work in sports. They may have needed guidance on how to construct careers in sport, whether playing or not. This

group was at least actively working towards constructing careers by being best at playing and hoping the future would be constructed through those efforts.

Most of the learners aspired but were not actively engaged in any form of career construction to realise their aspired careers while they are in school or at home. This was particularly true of those aspiring to white-collar occupations as those aspiring blue-collar occupations might not necessarily need to research as much as their careers might not be as dependent on academic performance or the choice of school subjects.

With regard to career support by parents, some learners were supported at home and some were not. When they were asked if they talked to their parents about what they wanted to become in future, there answers varied. One group, responding almost simultaneously, said, ***“No that does not happen. They do not know Sign Language. They only talk; our parents do not know Sign Language.”***

“No, we do not talk to them”.

However, some said, ***“Yes, we do communicate about it.”*** Those who said they communicated, were asked if their parents knew Sign Language and they answered together, saying, ***“Yes, some can use Sign Language, some are trying, and they are learning it”.***

Another one said, ***“My mother cannot sign, so we write down when we communicate”.***

Another group of learners said, ***“Yes, we do get advices on careers”.*** They were referring to parental advice.

The main issue that emerged was the communication barrier between parents and learners. Although some parents were trying, their inability to communicate in Sign Language was a challenge and they had to use other methods of communication, like writing. When comparing the support from parents with the support from school, learners seemed to feel more supported by their parents than by their school.

“From my side I get most support from home, I cannot say I am getting any support from the school.”

This was the response of one learner. When they were asked if they felt the same way almost all of them said, ***“Yes, here at school there is not much support and help, unlike at home.”***

There was also no peer support for career construction. They did not talk to each other or share career ideas. ***“No, we do not talk about that at hostel.”***

The data on career role models revealed that the learners spoke to deaf adults in their community and at school. They were looking to some of them as role models.

“Yes, we do talk; we talk with the deaf, the deaf adults who are working here at school.”

Further, they said, ***“Yes, we wish to be like them, we envy their money”***, and they laugh.

“Yes, I have. I wish to be like (A deaf teacher aid)” one learner said in response to whether she had a role model.

Their aspirations seemed to be constructed from role modelling. The deaf adults who were role models were teacher aids, hostel housemothers and laundry workers. Some role models

were their schoolteachers and the principal. Some role models were family members who worked at shops. This meant that they had role models, but that their role models were people in their community. There were very few people in white-collar occupations who were mentioned as role models, and those people were not deaf. The role models who shared their trait of deafness were mostly in blue-collar occupations. This information meant that there was a lack of deaf role models in white-collar occupations. This could be the reason why their aspirations were mostly around blue-collar occupations and why they seemed to be more comfortable with these occupational choices.

Participants also mentioned a lack of deaf teachers and claimed that the teacher aids in schools had limited knowledge of subject content. This emphasised the lack of career role models for deaf learners, and this affected their career goals. They, however, acknowledged that deaf people were competent in social areas and that they were not completely unable. This sub-theme reveals that career construction happens in different ways from what was expected and that its support was inadequate. This was because of a lack of career guidance education system through the education system, communication barriers with parents and a lack of deaf role models in white-collar occupations.

Another dominant issue on support was related to curriculum and grade progression. The learners were unhappy about the implementation of the CAPS curriculum. They said it was difficult for them. They did not understand the content of subjects because they were abstract. They did not like the language of instruction, English, which they said they did not understand. It was difficult for them.

“Here at school, we are taught subjects like for example English, and we don’t know English, maybe technology and we don’t know technology but its taught, we don’t think we will go to university, we don’t know English, we don’t know even that technology we don’t think we will get to university.”

They seemed to want education that would teach them skills, things that they could do with their hands rather than learning content subjects. They described themselves as forgetful people but if they did things practically then they remembered those things better. They claimed the education they received was *“ugly and boring”* and they claimed, *“we bear the pain.”* They talked as if it was torture for them to be in class because they did not understand the content taught in classrooms. That is why they said that education was ugly and boring. Maybe this was because they had to sit in class with limited activity or interaction with the teacher or the subject content.

A few learners, however, did not have any problem with the CAPS curriculum; they seemed to be coping with the content subjects. These learners were from the second site of data collection and seemed to have concrete support from home. They seemed to be learning and had no negative feelings about the CAPS curriculum. It seems as if the issue might also be related to the implementation of the CAPS curriculum, the language of instruction and the teaching methods.

Learners were also concerned about the way they were promoted to the next grades. They said, *“We are pushed,”* and they did not like the idea of being pushed to the next grade even though they knew they had not done well or they had not understood the subject content. They did not

understand why they were promoted when their school reports showed that they had not passed the grade. They felt as if the teachers were getting rid of them by pushing them to the next grade. They felt that they were not learning anything in school and that they were just passing time and being pushed through grades without gaining the necessary knowledge. They were progressed without meeting academic outcomes. The reasons associated with the learners' choice of skills education was related to language barriers in teaching and learning. They mentioned their concern about being promoted to higher grades with no knowledge, but the reason for that lack of knowledge was also related to the communication barrier in classrooms.

This is the climate under which careers are constructed and supported in the high schools for the deaf in the Eastern Cape Province. However, this is the perspective of learners, we further explore other perspectives which include the parents, education system and guiding documents.

4.3. Objective two.

To explore parent perspectives and their roles in supporting their deaf children in constructing future careers.

The data from parents, also analysed through themes, is summarised in the diagram below.

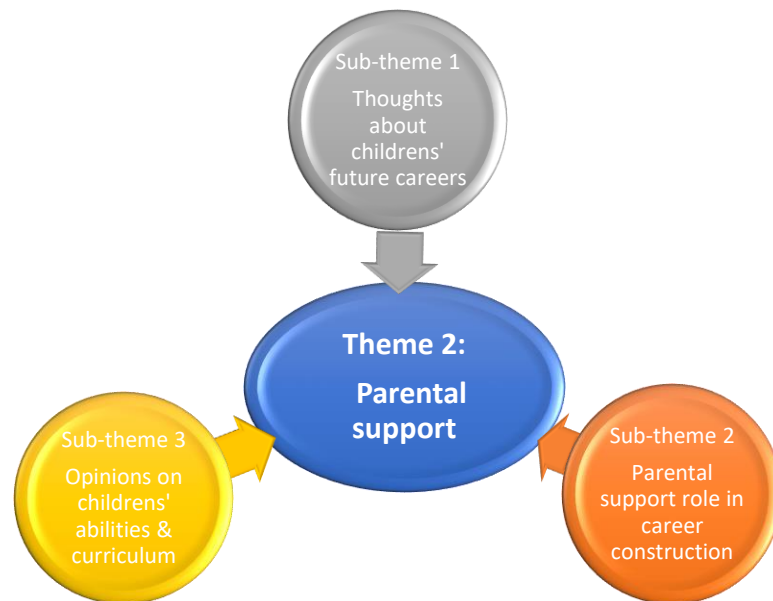


Figure 15: Theme 2 and sub-themes from data from individual interviews with parents

4.3.1 The parents

In this section, the voices are of the parents of deaf learners. These parents were individually telephonically interviewed. Their responses were short and answered the guiding questions. This resulted in a compromise of the richness of their responses. The methodology chapter details how and why the interviews were conducted in this way. The total number of parents interviewed was 19. These parents were all hearing and had never experienced deafness personally. They were all isiXhosa speaking, while their D/deaf children knew primarily Sign

Language. Most of them were not formally educated or had little formal education. They were first time parents to children with a hearing disability. The illustration below attempts to communicate the sense the researcher had about the predicament of a possible communication barrier between the parents and their D/deaf children.



Figure 16: A graphic representation of the communication challenge between parents and their children.

Most of the parents lived in rural areas where the stigma of disability was still embedded and where people with disabilities were not regarded as of value, especially in terms of economy and employment. This was observed during the researcher's seven years work experience of in rural rehabilitation services. The researcher also assumed that they had had no prior knowledge of hearing disability and what it actually affects or how it affects the functioning of a deaf person. Their world was predominantly speaking, they had no experience of the world of a deaf

person, deaf community or deaf education. The schools of the deaf where their children had been placed and enrolled was a world of mystery to them. These parents were mostly not working, living as homemakers, or working in low income generating jobs. A few of these parents worked as civil servants or were self-employed.

This background of the parents is provided to assist the reader to understand the identity and the position of these participants. However, as much as they may have had little knowledge on the disability of deafness, deaf education or how careers are constructed or how children could be supported by parents for career construction, the parents loved their children and wished the best for them and hoped the process of education would yield better lives for their children.



Picture 3: A Photo of a deep rural village representing typical homesteads where the learners came from.

4.3.1.1. Theme 2: Parental Support for career construction of learners.

4.3.1.1.1. Sub-theme 1: Parents' thoughts about their children's future careers.

This sub-theme emerged from codes and category that responded to a guiding question as per individual interview guide that aimed to understand the parents' thoughts on whether their deaf children have the potential to continue with school beyond high school, and the reasons for their thoughts.

Parents' responses to this question revealed different thoughts and concerns about the construction of careers by their children. There was an uncertainty about whether children will be able to continue with education beyond high school or not. This was associated with the parents' inability to communicate in sign language with their children. They said; ***“We do not know Sign Language. We cannot engage with them.”*** This caused a barrier in communication about their children studying beyond high school. Parents realised their lack of communicative engagement with their children was due to their lack of Sign Language knowledge or any other means of communicating. Parents of d/Deaf learners may need great support to improve communication with their children early, in order to give the required career construction help.

Parents expressed concern about the capacity of their children to cope with academic content. They noticed a drop in performance as the grades advanced. One parent said, ***“Maybe it is getting difficult for her to be in school;”*** and another said, ***“He was doing well, but now he has dropped.”*** Parents seemed to be concerned about the academic demands beyond high school and almost feared that their children might not be academically capable or strong enough to handle education beyond high school.

Parents were concerned about the age limit of children enrolling in school and feared that it might prevent their children from finishing matric. This was imposed by policies that rule age boundaries for schooling. Their children might have reached that limit before they finished high school and they might be denied the opportunity to study beyond high school by those education policies. One of the parents said, ***“I am not sure if she will finish her matric because of her age.”*** Deaf children were observed, during data collection by the researcher, to be old for the grades they were in; the age of schooling factor was an issue for them because most of them had started school late due to many factors including late deafness diagnosis and late school enrolment/placement.

The fourth issue that was raised by the parents on this theme was the lack of availability of institutions of higher learning that cater for deaf people.

“My worry is where will he go? Because even now he wants to change schools but here are no options”.

“Yes, he can study, but it will require special needs and patience”, said another parent.

The last issue that was raised by parents was that their children might be hindered by deafness itself as a disability to continue with education beyond high school.

“I do not know if she can get to social work because she is deaf.” This parent was raising an issue that the researcher associates with the stigma of being disabled. However, the parent might have been trying to say that career choices are not for deaf people; maybe this was raising the issue of a lack of education institutions of higher learning that cater for further

education and training of deaf people. She could also have meant that she did not know any deaf social workers.

Parents were thinking about the future of their children. They raised important issues of concern. As the study is further refined, these issues are explored and refined further to get the deeper meaning of their thoughts and maybe some understanding of these issues which affect the ways parents support their deaf children for future careers.

4.3.1.1.2. Sub-theme 2: Parents' supporting role for career construction

This theme emerged from responses to a question which aimed to understand how parents support the career construction of their deaf children, their contribution to or involvement in the process. On talking about future careers with their children, many parents said they did not talk about careers when the children were at home. They never asked about them. Some parents said that they had heard their children talking to other people about what they wanted to become but they themselves had not asked further questions or engaged their children in career talks.

"I was once called at school, when he had to go to a doctor for something, we were accompanied by someone from school, and he was asked by the doctor what is he studying towards and he said he wanted to be a doctor. He has also said it to me that he wants to be a doctor."

Some parents however indicated that they had talked about careers with their deaf children at one level of conversation or another. When looking at the fact that many parents generally did not engage in the career construction of their children, it seems that the issue of career

construction was left as a decision of the children and the education system. This could be because most parents were not experienced in jobs outside of home and not formally educated.

“I am not sure, we don’t talk about what she wants to become.” It does not seem that parents are not interested, but that career construction was something they had never thought important to discuss or get involved in.

“I never asked her. The teacher said she wants to be a hair stylist. I have never asked her myself.”

It seems that the expectation was that when they were in school, they must know what they were studying towards. Maybe the career guidance was seen as the responsibility of the curriculum.

“I’m not sure if the school will direct him towards that, I am not sure of the school efforts, but as long as he is in school I am happy. He is an ambitious child in life.”

The education levels and career awareness of parents was unknown, especially when it came to people with hearing disabilities. Maybe the motivation and high expectations were not there. The ability to be role models and to support their children was simply not there, we do not know. Overall, the data shows that although parents were interested in the education of the children, there was limited involvement of parents in the career construction of deaf learners.

With regard to support for careers, some parents were actively supporting the career construction of their children by encouraging them in their school life, giving them money to

attend sporting events, checking their school books and reports, going with them to sports events and buying hair products to motivate talent and for support.

“We make sure he is at school, when he is back I check his books to show my interests in his interest. I am interested and show interest in things he likes like when he is back, I will go with him to the stadium to watch soccer game.”

Some parents were inactively supportive by allowing them to watch their favourite TV channels and encouraging them to be in school. Some parents would have liked to be supportive but were not sure how to support for career construction. Some parents admitted that they did not do anything to support their children in their career construction. There seemed to be actively supportive parents, inactively supportive parents and parents that did nothing to support the career construction of their learners. However, the support mostly seemed to be present, whether active or not. Parents who were not supportive seemed to be unsure of how could they support. They were the ones who might be leaving career construction support to the curriculum and the learners themselves. However, there was generally positive support for career construction by parents despite some parents being actively involved and others inactively.

As far as the question of parents saving finances for the further education of their children as part of their supporting role towards career construction, it was apparent that few parents were saving for the further education of their children. The majority of parents did not save money for further education. They said they were unemployed and had no income to save. One parent said,

“He must save from his grant money. I am a single parent and I am not working.”

There were parents who would make the means available when their children went on to tertiary institutions. Most parents indicated that they depended on their children’s government disability grants for their families’ survival.

“We live on her grant money. It might be a challenge in funding her studies further.”

“We all depend on his grant money.”

However, some parents were not living on their children’s disability grants, but had given the children full responsibility for their disability grants; these parents hoped that their children were saving for their education from the grants. This is what parents said, as they responded to this interview question.

“I do not have the money to further her studies though, she is managing her grant herself, I hope she is saving for her education.”

It seems as if, for the parents, there were no financial means of support planned for education towards their children’s future careers. Only a few parents seemed to be preparing to financially support further education for their children. The dependence on disability grants seemed to be heavy, both for the education of their children and for family survival. The grants may not have been enough to cover all these livelihood needs. It seems that education and further training for white-collar jobs was further hindered by lack of financial support from parents.

When speaking of the communication ability between parents and children about careers and support provision, the majority of parents indicated that they did not know Sign Language.

When they communicated with their deaf children they spoke and expected their children to read their lips, they wrote to or texted to them, or they used gestures and pointing to communicate or they communicated through the siblings. One parent said they did not communicate at all except to smile at each other. It ended there.

“I don’t know these signs of her, we smile and it ends there, it becomes nice when we smile at each other.”

Some parents were trying to learn Sign Language taught by their deaf children or the siblings. It was only very few parents who were able to fully use Sign Language to communicate with their deaf children who used Sign Language as their main language of communication.

If most parents cannot communicate effectively with their deaf children, in the language of their children, then the support for career construction is limited. There is no language of communication, no channel for exchanging ideas and advice, and no communicative interaction. It seems there is a general lack of effective communication between deaf children and their parents; and this affects support for career construction.

4.3.1.1.3. Sub-theme 3: Parents’ opinions of children’s abilities and the curriculum

Most parents noted and acknowledged that their children were naturally gifted and skilled people, which talks to their capabilities. However, a few parents said they did not notice their children’s talents. The skills and talents of deaf learners mentioned by their parents included the following: handwork, sewing, sport, cooking, herding livestock, fixing cars, hairdressing, traditional and modern dancing and acting, domestic work, fixing electrical appliances, storytelling and stand-up comedy or telling jokes. Most of these talents and natural gifts seemed

to be aligned with artistic talent. as It appeared to the researcher that the parents said their children were mainly gifted in various forms of creativity. In terms of the natural abilities of deaf learners, there seems to be consensus that they are naturally gifted and skills training would benefit them. This opinion was expressed by parents, teachers, Department of Education officials and the learners themselves.

Parents' opinions differed about the potential of their children to pass matric. Some saw this potential in their children and some learners were already in matric and their parents were hoping that they would pass. The issue of the school age limit was again mentioned. Some parents said that even though there was the potential to obtain matric, the age limit might prevent their children from getting their matric. There were parents who said their children had no potential to obtain matric. Some related this response to the fact that their children's performance was getting poorer as they progressed through the grades. In addition, some parents thought that the actual performance of their children was worse than what was reflected in their school reports.

One of the parents said, ***"No, when I compare with other kids, he is behind. If he is to write the same paper as other kids, he will not pass."***

Parents constantly voiced their preference for the previous education system of deaf schools which taught skills. They mentioned that in the past, their children and other deaf children who went to these schools were trained in skills. These skills were better, according to the parents because they provided a practical education for their deaf children. When the children left school, they had a skill, which they could use to earn a living. This was unlike the current

system, which requires them to obtain a matric certificate, before they can go for further education and training. The parents were concerned that if their children did not pass matric, they would leave the education system with nothing and this bothered them.

“It is not enough; I wish there could be skills training. I notice that although he is trying in subjects, he is not good. Maybe skills can at least give them something to live on than not passing matric at all. I notice even their English is not proper they mix terms.”

Following that interview, the researcher asked questions relating to why they had chosen one education system rather than another, and which system they felt was more beneficial to their children.

“Rather than him doing nothing I would accept that. I do not want them to just do nothing; I wish they could get something even a small job.”

A huge majority of the parents preferred the skills training that the deaf schools previously offered. They said this had been better for their children because for their children it was easier to do things than to read. CAPS was perceived to be difficult for their children. They felt that if learners could not progress academically, at least with skills training, they could leave school with something to do and to live on. Skills are what their children are good at and are wired for. Here are some direct words of parents:

“If she was taught skills she would be doing better, it is easy to do things than to read.”

“CAPS is difficult for them.”

“If she does not pass academic, at least she will have a skill to live on.”

“Skills are what they are good at.”

However, there were parents who were happy with CAPS; they liked it because their children were learning like mainstream children, and they would have the same matric certificate as mainstream schoolchildren. They did not mind them not having skills training if they obtained a matric certificate. They felt their children were coping with CAPS and had the potential to continue with education beyond matric:

“He must follow the academic stream and must pass.”

“He is in grade 11 I am waiting for him to get to grade 12.”

One parent, however, said she was happy as long as her child was at school, whether she was being taught skills or academic subjects, as long as she is not sitting at home with a stigma about her deafness, doing nothing.

“As long as he is in school, I am happy”.

“Yes, I wish she could progress if there was a way, she likes school and gets frustrated when people speak in the community, so she prefers being at school. She likes school a lot.”

The statements above also gave the researcher a sense of the existence of a disability or deafness stigma in the community, although this was outside of the focus of this study.

4.4. Objective three

To analyse the methods and processes in school curricular and extracurricular used by the education system to support deaf learners in constructing future careers.

4.4.1. The Department of Education teachers and officials

In this section of the results, the voices are of the teachers of deaf learners and the Department of Education officials. Eighteen teachers participated in the study. They differed in their teaching experience, some were more experienced than others in teaching deaf learners. This diversity in experience gave a broad perspective of teachers in different experiential positions. Two of the focus groups consisted of teachers in the FET phase. Moreover, one of the focus groups was composed of older teachers in the school who had been working there for many years and had been involved in one way or another in assisting and channelling learners for future careers. The researcher observed that their contributions were voluntary and very honest.

The officials who participated in the individual interviews held high and relevant positions in the Department of Education; they had the first-hand information on the topic. They had a responsibility to both the province and the two districts under study. They were specialists in their fields and gave expert opinions, based on their training, experience and current function. Because of their positions and busy work schedules, it was not easy to get hold of them for interviews, but once they were available, they showed a lot of interest in and contributed honestly to the study. This speaks to the importance of this study in informing their fields of work. Four Department of Education officials contributed to the study. The officials were interviewed individually, using the same interview guide for each of them. Although the

interviews were conducted using the same interview guide, because the officials were from different sections, the discussions yielded different information and took different approaches to the responses. This was a good thing because when one official clarified some information another confirmed what had been said. Most importantly, all sections of the relevant departments were represented which gave rigour and strength to the information obtained. They worked in the Curriculum and Special Needs Education sections, dealing with curriculum management (teaching and assessment), assisting learners with barriers in education and managing programs related to those services.

4.4.1.1. Theme 3: Curricular Support Methods

One theme and three sub-themes emerged from the group and individual interviews with teachers and the Department of Education officials. The following diagram summarises the findings of this objective:

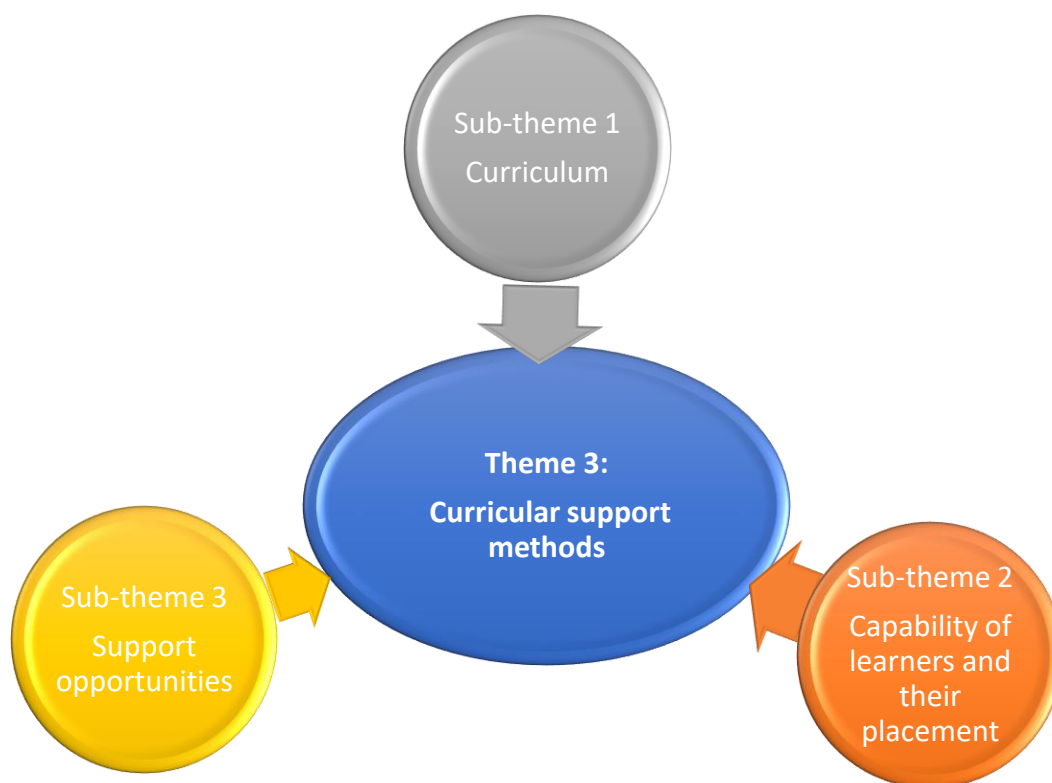


Figure 17: Theme 3 Curricular methods of support for career construction

4.4.1.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Issues with the current curriculum

CAPS is the policy guiding the curriculum. It caters for both mainstream and deaf schools nationally. The feeling of the officials was that this curriculum was difficult for learners, and particularly difficult for deaf schools, because it required prior knowledge or was based on experience.

“CAPS is not working for deaf learners because it requires learners to use knowledge, the deaf learners are better with skills training curriculum.”

Its pitching was too high for the learners, and it is overloaded in terms of its content depth. This was said to be one of the possible reasons for deaf learners not making it up to grade 12.

One of the officials said, *“Our planners have been too ambitious for our curriculum, it is an overload of the curriculum for them. I am not saying we must lower the standards but we always talk about content depth amongst teachers.”*

It was further mentioned that teachers were not fully capacitated for the current curriculum, as some of them could not comprehend the level of knowledge needed in the current curriculum level.

“...you can see the amount of work that they have to do in mathematics and accounting, is the work which some of the teachers did not do, some of those topics were done at university level. Our planners have been too ambitious for our curriculum...”

There was the specific and bigger challenge of curriculum adaptation and differentiation for deaf learners because they have to learn in a particular way. Due to their inability to hear, some adaptation of the way the curriculum is implemented is required.

Previously the special schools, including schools for the deaf, had skills training programs where the learners with disabilities were taught skills like sawing, hairdressing, leather work, woodwork, etc. The Department of Education did not recognise these programs because they were not part of the formal Education Department curricula. They saw them as part of an informal industry and not of school programs, according to the Department official. These skills were not accredited and there was no formal certification, which was to be expected at the end of schooling or of a formal training program. This resulted in deaf people being limited

to deaf schools and deaf communities for employment because the external communities did not recognise their education because of the lack of proper certification. The Department of Education has since removed these programs in their schools and only CAPS has been the recognised school curriculum in all school categories.

In the CAPS curricula, the only provision for career education content is in a subject called “Life Orientation” (shortened to LO). LO is said to be a broad subject and it does not concentrate much on career education. One of the officials claimed that the career education content of this subject is not emphasised in any detail ; it just introduces learners to different careers without many details. It is simply a theme or topic among many topics in LO. This subject is also not weighted heavily in scoring for tertiary education admission. This may result in its being less of a focus in schools. The official, talking on this point of discussion during the interview said, ***“It is not necessarily yielding the results for some kids that it is supposed to yield.”***

The current curriculum has not been evaluated for suitability for deaf learners, but there are performance data, which show trends and records of how learners perform. On assessment of learners, all learners in the department are assessed the same way, as is recommended by the curriculum. There are no special assessment methods tailored for deaf learners. The official said, ***“Unfortunately, we do not separate them from the mainstream when we evaluate the curriculum, and we judge them the same as others.”***

Another issue with regard to the curriculum that came up as interesting, was the fact of comorbidity of learners. This refers to learners who have more than one disability. It was

maintained that some learners could not cope with the current curriculum because of multiple disabilities. This affected them in coping with the current curriculum and many drop out because they have other disabilities, in addition to their deafness, which affect their learning.

There was a consensus amongst teachers about the lack of guiding policies on deaf education or its implementation. They agreed that if there were policies in place, the deaf learners could do better in education. Some policies said to be lacking were policies on admission criteria, which led to admission of learners based on their dominant disability, deafness. One teacher said, *“We also suspect prevalence of other disabilities to some of our learners, and we have a mixture of disabilities.”* The existence of multiple disabilities could affect the learning and performance of deaf learners and their career construction.

There were several important issues raised with regard to the curriculum, based on the CAPS curriculum document. The teachers said that deaf learners took too many subjects and that they were too difficult for them; these subjects are difficult even for mainstream learners.

“Yes, it is our feeling that the curriculum is particularly heavy for special schools and they are not making it up to grade 12 ...”

“You know now schools that have good grade 12 passes have to do enormous work, especially our schools, they utilize teaching time well but still they have to camp at the school, hold evening and morning classes and doing a lot of extra work, they conduct winter schools they really go an extra mile. The kids are made to work too much, they are being suffocated, they don’t have time to be kids, they have to work hard in order to achieve.” This official was referring to schools for hearing learners, trying to illustrate the amount of work that has to

happen for learners generally to achieve good matric results and he was emphasizing that the situation was worse for D/deaf learners who did not even have the extra opportunity to be drilled in order to pass their matric.

The officials said that the pitching of subjects was high for the learners, the content had too many words and was difficult for deaf learners to understand. One teacher said, ***“Our learners have problems translating figurative speech or concepts as they take everything literal, this makes it difficult for learning to happen outside of classroom without the teachers.”*** They said that communicating content subjects to the learners was not easy for the teachers as the language of teaching was English; it was not easy to translate to South African Sign Language. Language seemed to be a big problem in carrying out the curriculum and the teachers needed the curriculum to be adapted for deaf learners.

The teacher said, ***“When I got to the class first time, I was over prepared and ready, but I had to change my teaching strategy due to inadequate foundation of learners. I had to change my teaching technique and make things easy for the learners to understand. They have poor memory. The problem is poor foundation, and this is frustrating to teachers.”***

“There is a barrier while teaching I have to convert English to Sign Language so I can be able to transfer the knowledge.”

The teachers currently make these adaptations and this delays the finishing of the curriculum. There was a strong statement made: ***“This CAPS does not fit our learners and our learners do not fit the CAPS.”*** They mentioned that CAPS expected the same pace for deaf and hearing learners and that this was not possible. CAPS required learners to use prior knowledge, which

deaf learners might not have. The teachers were referring to the fact that D/deaf learners often develop language late and miss the opportunity of learning many early concepts which are foundational to coping with the current curriculum. As the researcher listened to the conversations, she sensed that teachers of the deaf learners did not favour the CAPS curriculum without adaptation for deaf learners; they advocated for a more technical curriculum or a skills training curriculum.

When it came to assessment, the issues related to the structure of Sign Language, which is different from spoken language or English, and this becomes a barrier when deaf learners are being assessed, because they write as they sign and this may not make sense to examiners who are not familiar with Sign Language.

“Another challenge is the language. The language structure of Sign Language and spoken language is not the same. The deaf people write as they talk and this becomes a barrier when they are being assessed.” In the examinations, there were no Sign Language interpreters for deaf learners and this posed a challenge for them. If the examinations could be conducted in Sign Language, the deaf learners would perform better.

The content of Life Orientation was also mentioned as not covering sufficient career information or providing enough guidance or support for career construction. The teachers said it was only a short topic that covered careers and that it was not adequate for the construction of careers.

“The Life Orientation subject is not broad enough to cover careers content.”

“We don’t have a structured way of career guidance so to speak, they would form part of your LO wherein they get introduced to different careers as part of the content of what is getting taught in LO.”

“LO is very broad , it doesn’t really concentrate in one thing, it’s not even an examinable subject it is just an elective if we can put it in that way, it does not carry much weight in any case but it is there as a subject, perhaps we don’t spend enough time looking at your career type things maybe becomes a theme of a lesson topic, but I don’t think they dwell much on career education.”

The deaf schools did not offer a variety of subjects for learners to choose from, unlike their hearing counterparts. They had no choice of subject; they were dependent on the schools’ stream choices. The schools each had only one stream, either a technical stream or a business stream. Technical subjects included civil technology, technical mathematics, drawing, Life Orientation, English and Sign Language. They could not offer more streams because of the numbers of deaf learners enrolled - teacher numbers depended on learner numbers. This also carried disadvantages for future career choices. It meant that they were being channelled to certain career streams not by choice, but by default of where they were schooling. This could mean that the education system was preparing deaf learners in the Eastern Cape only for technical careers and business careers.

According to the strategy of the department, another curriculum stream is to be introduced, the **‘technical-occupational stream’**. It is still in its pilot stage within the province where three schools of skills are being piloted. According to the official, this stream has been rolled out in

other provinces. With this stream, the learners will be taught skills like plumbing, sawing, hair dressing etc. but, this time around, they will leave with accreditation and certification, which will be recognised by potential employers. This stream has its challenges, especially in its development stages but it is hoped that it will be an option for learners who are not able to make it through the academic stream as well as those who choose to follow it for other reasons.

4.4.1.1.2. Sub-theme 2: Capability of D/deaf learners and learner placements in schools

When referring to the capabilities of deaf learners, one of the officials said that deaf learners could be anything, they have the ability but it is just that the education system is not ready or lacks the capacity to assist them cope with the subject content.

“I think they are able learners in their own right, so to say they may not necessarily do... you know the curriculum they are doing, I don’t think is right...”

“...Other than that, they can be anything, they have the ability but it’s just that the system must be ready to make them ready to cope in any subject.”

This was said after all the challenges had been discussed and was an addition to all the other challenges of the education system. It was also highlighted that there are few deaf learners, which makes them a minority in the bigger population of learners - and they are not strong academically. For the researcher, this meant that the attention and focus of the education system is on the majority of learners in mainstream schools, they are a priority for the Department. Maybe the success of the system is measured against that majority.

“There are fewer teachers in this school because the number of learners determines the number of teachers, the numbers of our learners does not allow for more teachers.”

“So one report that came out was that the curriculum does not necessarily go to special schools as they are supposed to do mainly because people sometimes feel like we want to make impact when we go there, but if I am not capacitated fully to deal and address the challenges that those special schools face then people will tend not to put a focus on special schools in terms of that, which is wrong,...”.

The officials also said that it would be more practical for deaf learners to work with their hands and take subjects that would guide them towards that because they are good and gifted at working with their hands. Another catchy statement in the data was that deaf learners were not necessarily looking to go to universities; they only needed education for survival. When discussing career exhibitions and how they accommodated deaf learners, the official said, *“But these learners in special schools we invite them to these activities, but our career exhibitions talk about achieving people of grade 12 and going to tertiary, going to that and that, and we are talking above their heads, they find that they are not accommodated, these skills we don’t talk about them. They won’t be thinking and looking to go into universities, what they need is survival, so then we said the people who should be coming to talk to them are not higher institutions but are SETAs who will talk about how to get to a particular working environment and what is needed, how do they train them and offer them work...”*

The Department also resolved to judge the performance of deaf learners differently from that of their hearing counterparts because the amount that deaf learners grasp may not be on the

same level as hearing learners. They judge them at a lower level when they are rewarding the top learners in matric. Hence, the top learner of special schools would only have achieved levels 4 and 3, unlike the top learners of mainstream schools who would have level 7s in all subjects. The researcher thinks this is to motivate them to achieve better and to acknowledge that, despite their challenges, they have still made it through matric.

On this issue, the learners themselves said that they should be taught in a particular way because they are forgetful people. They seemed to prefer education that teaches them skills, things that they can do with their hands rather than learning subjects' content. They described themselves as forgetful people but say that if they do things practically then they remember those things better.

Teachers noted that deaf learners often do not reach or complete grade 12. They attributed this observation to the learners' performance in school grades, which is caused by, amongst many reasons, lack of culture of learning in deaf learners. They said that deaf learners could not learn without a teacher in front of them. Learners are teacher dependent. **"They do not even read,"** said one teacher.

There was a cloud around the issue and the process of learner placements in schools, especially when looking at multiple disabilities. This was a concern for teachers, the Department of Education officials and it was mentioned by some parents as a possible hindrance to the academic progress of their children. On placements of learners with comorbidity, the Department officials responsible consider the disability that would most hinder the learners' access to the curriculum and make it the primary disability. Placements are decided on the basis

of their grading of disabilities. The disabilities, according to assessment reports, are categorised according to primary, secondary, etc levels. They then look at how the learner can best access the curriculum and the disability that would still allow them to access the curriculum in some way, is used when deciding on placements. On placing learners in schools for the deaf, the researcher quotes the words of an official responsible for school placements:

“So, for me if a child has a mild cognitive impairment as well as a profound sensory-neural hearing loss, as well as wheel chair bound, I will place that child in a deaf school because that is where that child will be taught Sign Language and to use that as a form of communication. So, we do have kids with comorbid disabilities but we look in the disability that will benefit this child being in this school.”

In addition, there is the challenge of late school placements of deaf learners, caused by late identification and diagnosis of deafness.

“Screening of learners for placements would assist in proper placements as this affects academic progress of learners later”.

This then affects their language development, which is crucial for learning. By the time they are placed in schools, they have already missed the critical age of language acquisition, three to seven.

“Ideally a child needs to get into a deaf school at age 4 but we are finding that we are getting them there very late in their lives, they have already missed out. We also know that critical age of language acquisition is three to seven years. If you going to admit a child and introduce a new language to them at age eight or nine then it becomes a problem you are

setting that child up for failure for a lack of a better word because now in addition to having to give input in terms of language, teaching them language rules you also need to teach them in that language that they have not mastered from a very young age, so automatically the child because of systematic problem has been deemed that they will have academically a problem.” The words of an education official.

The teachers also emphasised that language is important for education and that late language acquisition affects learning.

“Deaf children acquire language very late and this leads to isolation. They are called by names like “isimumu” (which means the mute one) and they are shamed. This isolation and shaming contribute to the parents and children’s confidence to socialise early and acquire language early”.

“They start late in schools aged +- 12years and they must do grade one or grade R. At that age, they have to start acquiring language, which is Sign Language. They only get their names in schools and we know language is important for education. When finally, in school now they struggle with education concepts”.

Learners are not able to communicate well with parents at home because parents do not know Sign Language. This challenge also exists for some of the teachers at school which means that deaf children have poor access to information. Further, they have poor access to information from other sources than the teachers. They do not benefit much from television, radio stations or public transport where their hearing counterparts pick up information. They know mainly

what they are taught in school. They sometimes attend career exhibitions with their hearing counterparts, but they do not benefit from those because of the language barrier.

Late language acquisition also leads to late self-identification of deaf learners. By the time they can identify themselves and learn their language they are already too grown up for school grades and this affects the career construction. Moreover, teachers said that deaf learners have poor memories and this affects their school performance. There was also a mention of the lack of deaf teachers, and that the teacher aids in schools had limited knowledge of subject content. This emphasised the fact of a lack of career role models for deaf learners, which affects their career goals. They, however, acknowledged that deaf people are competent in social areas and that they are not completely incompetent.

The Department of Education officials mentioned a policy on school age which limits learners from being in schools beyond the age of 18. However, in some cases, if they are benefitting from the curriculum, they may remain until they are 21. This affects deaf learners who are placed late in schools because it means that they have to leave before completing their education. The teachers mentioned that there is a policy on grade progression of learners and this policy was not favourable for deaf learners who enter school system late and have to exit before they reach high school. Teachers sometimes have to analyse the situations and decide on what to do without guiding documentation from the Department of Education. Referring to the same policy, some parents claimed that even though deaf learners had the potential to obtain matric, the age to the age restrictions prevented them from getting there. One parent said, **“I am not sure if she will finish her matric because of her age.”**

4.4.1.1.3. Sub-theme 3: Curricular support for career construction

On curricular support of the career construction of deaf learners, the teachers, informed by the Department of Education policies, reported using Life Orientation as the curricular vehicle to host any career education content, although, according to officials, its efficacy in this regard was unsatisfactory. *“LO is very broad , it doesn’t really concentrate in one thing, it is not even an examinable subject it is just an elective if we can put it in that way, it does not carry much weight in any case but it is there as a subject, perhaps we don’t spend enough time looking at your career type things maybe becomes a theme of a lesson topic, but I don’t think they dwell much on career education”.*

“... So, in some cases it is not yielding the results that it is supposed to”.

However, the Department has employed Sign Language interpreters for deaf schools to assist the teachers and deaf learners in every class.

For the first time in 2018, Sign Language was recognised as a home language which has put deaf learners on an equal footing with other learners when it comes to language assessments, unlike before, when Sign Language was not examined.

The national Department of Education organised a winter school for deaf learners with scripted lessons for the first time in 2018. This was managed by the provincial Department of Education. It was welcomed by the deaf schools although the logistics of getting learners in one place were reported to be very difficult.

The district-based Departments of Education, in partnership with other stakeholders, hosts annual career expo events where learners and schools are invited and informed about different career fields. The benefit of this to deaf learners is unknown as it mainly accommodates hearing learners in terms of language.

The officials said the Department of Education's support is not at the level it should be. The direct words were: *"I do not think we are supporting them fully as this is supposed."* This was attributed to the following reasons:

- Lack of capacity to address the challenges that these schools face; this was acknowledged as being a concern.
- The officials who are not capacitated by the system for curriculum management and support for special schools.
- Language of communication between the officials and the deaf learners was a barrier in offering support and makes it difficult to accommodate deaf schools.

There was, however, a commitment by one of the officials to follow up with the junior officials and encourage them to visit deaf schools and to be aware of them. Although the officials meet staff from deaf schools in moderation sessions, the support they give is unknown. The Department is also working on the long-term plan of building education circuits to give added support to the schools.

The following diagram summarises the findings of the extracurricular focus of this objective.

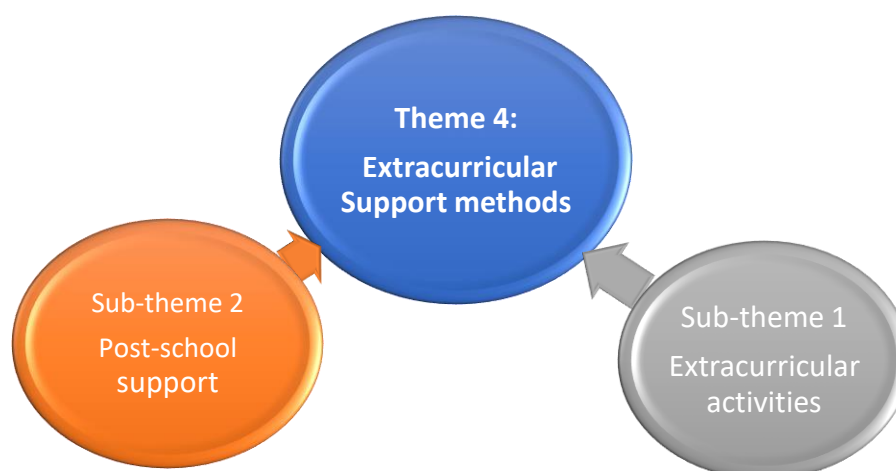


Figure 18: Theme 4 Extracurricular methods to support career construction

4.4.1.2. Theme 4: Extracurricular support

Extracurricular activities include activities like music, arts, dance and sport; deaf learners are active in all of these, but no deaf learner, in this study, is known to have constructed a career of any of them. Besides these, the Department does not have a structured form of career guidance. There used to be career guidance officials but those positions have been removed and replaced with subject advisors, said the official.

The second part of objective number four of this study was to analyse extra curriculum career guidance used by high school teachers to support deaf learners in constructing future careers. From the focus group discussions, it appears that there are no extra curriculum career guidance methods used by schoolteachers to support deaf learners in the construction of their careers.

The opportunities that are there, are initiatives of non-government organisations and private colleges.

4.4.1.2.1. Sub-theme 1: Extracurricular activities

The education system does not support activities like sports and arts for career construction. Teachers said that deaf children do not progress in sports because school sports prioritise hearing learners. This may be because of the language barrier between Sign Language users and spoken language users.

“These children excel in sport, but they are not identified beyond school sports. I suspect the language barrier. The school sports prioritize hearing people.”

Teachers also said: *“It is difficult for schools to focus on sports, because D/deaf learners who play sport may lose learning time and fail the grade.”*

On other extracurricular activities besides sport, teachers said, *“Many deaf people, if well channeled are greatly gifted with skills like dancing, sewing etc. and they can leave off that.”*

4.4.1.2.2. Sub-theme 2: Available post-school support

Teachers also mentioned career support services available for their learners. Amongst these services is what has been termed “an aftercare program”, in which they get enrolled when they reach the school age limit of 18.

“The school has an aftercare-training program. This program takes learners who are over the school going age. They train these learners for skills, while they are waiting for them to get placements on occupational training programs.”

In the aftercare program, they are taught skills like building, woodwork and other menial jobs. This facility is within the deaf community but is not part of the school. Mostly the support for careers is from non-governmental organisations, the education system itself has no programs in place for careers of their deaf learners.

The teachers added that: ***“Some learners get into a learnership program offered by the Department of Public Works. There they train them for trade tests and they get trade certificates. This program does not need grade 12. We have learners who are in that program and some are already employed.”*** The current programs are not guided by government policies. Some learners are admitted learnership programs offered by the Department of Public Works, where they are trained for artisan-related jobs.

It was also said, ***“There is E-Deaf who is a national deaf association who train deaf children on skills for employment. They get employed as packers in supermarkets, tills, garages etc. Informally E-Deaf and the NID comes to school to communicate with deaf people from outside and they come and conduct written interviews and selects potential candidates from there. We support that initiative although we cannot influence it. Our province is moving very slowly to develop deaf people.”***

E-DEAF, a national deaf association was mentioned as one of the organisations that trains deaf people in skills for employment. They are the top trainers of Deaf people for skills in South

Africa. Through a number of empowerment and skills development programs, E-DEAF aims to strengthen the social and economic lives of the Deaf community. They build employable deaf people who can contribute to the economy by adding value, not just to the individuals they train. They contribute to improving the overall economy by minimising dependence on social grants provided by the government. Identified learners are equipped and are employed as packers and cashiers in supermarkets and petrol attendants at fuel stations.

“After the learner has completed with us or for progression of education, our learners get admitted at NID in Worcester in the Western Cape. The NID comes to our school and identify learners who have a potential to meet their basic training entry requirements.”

The National Institute for the Deaf (NID) sends scouts to schools for learners who have the potential to meet their training entry requirements. NID Training is a registered Private FET College that provides occupational training to persons with hearing loss to enable them to reach their full potential. Their training programs include agriculture, beauty and nail technology, business administration, care practitioner, construction, end-user computing, hospitality, jewellery manufacturing, upholstery, welding, joinery and spray painting.

This information gives us a picture of what resources are available for D/deaf learners after their schooling. There is no government program that looks after their employability and this raises the questions of what the government thinks about deaf people and why there is no government-driven plan for them. This refers to both education and economic activities.

4.5. Objective Four

To critically review policies and guidelines from the Departments of Education that address the career development of Deaf learners.

To meet the second objective of this study, policies were critically, reviewed and analysed, using content analysis and critical policy analysis methods. Five policy documents were selected and reviewed. They were reviewed for their aim, main content, their audience and their relevance to the study. The details of how this was done is detailed in the methodology chapter. Below is an illustration of the covers of some of the reviewed policies:

Education guiding documents reviewed



Picture 4: A collage of photos of some of the Department of Education career guiding documents reviewed

4.5.1. Document 1: Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)

The aim of this document is to guide teaching and assessment in schools. CAPS gives details of what should be taught in schools by teachers, when it should be taught in terms of the annual teaching plan and it details the assessment. It was developed based on the National Curriculum Statement to guide teaching annually and throughout the year in terms of selecting topics and assessment. The document tries to link teaching and assessment. Its audience is mainly the teachers and district officials who have to make sure it is implemented. This curriculum aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives. In this regard, the curriculum promotes knowledge in local contexts, while being sensitive to global imperatives. This curriculum assumes that learners have prior knowledge of the concepts, as the subjects from grade R include content subjects like Mathematics and Life Skills. This document is relevant to this study because it details the issues of curriculum and assessment, which are core issues in methods used by the Department of Education and teachers to support the career construction of learners. It talks about the content of what is taught in schools and that which guides learners towards making career choices. The assumptions of this policy that learners have some content knowledge before the lessons, may disadvantage the learners under study because they may lack the required prior language due to their late language acquisition. This may result in limited pre-literacy skills and vocabulary. The policy further centres the content of learning on learner experience rather than teacher experience.

There is inconsistency in terms of what this policy says or provides for and the practicality of its assumptions when it comes to D/deaf learners. Hence, the CAPS curriculum may be too

difficult for D/deaf learners. The International Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities has declared a right to education for all people with disabilities but the CAPS policy's provision for this right comes with challenges in practice for D/deaf learners and their teachers, as the content delivery in classrooms is challenged by the aforementioned issues. This reveals a gap in policy and practice in this regard. The policy does not reduce the marginalisation of D/deaf learners and does not address the existing inequality in education in South Africa, especially for this minority group.

4.5.2. Document 2: The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for South African Sign Language (SASL) Grades R-12

The aim of this ground-breaking policy, approved in July 2014, was to remove the long-time marginalisation of learners in South Africa who are Deaf. They had been deprived of a home language. This impacted the extent of their retention within the system and their opportunities of studying further, up to and including higher education institutions (Department of Education, 2014). Its content ensures that South African Sign Language is used as a language of teaching and learning. It therefore begins a new era in the education experiences of d/Deaf learners in the education system (Department of Basic Education, 2014)

This policy is relevant to this study because it speaks to its heart, as it addresses the concern of deaf education in South Africa. In principle, it contributes positively to the inclusion of D/deaf learners in education and maybe it is instrumental in addressing the existing disparities in education. However, the learners under study may not benefit from it because its

implementation does not seem to have been effected yet. The teachers and learners did not mention it, which makes its publicity questionable.

4.5.3. Document 3: Education White Paper 6 - Special Needs Education Building an inclusive education and training system

This white paper was developed in 2001, after the International Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities. It contributed, as a foundation, to the international call for inclusive education imperative for people with disabilities.

“The Ministry believes that the key to reducing barriers to learning within all education and training lies in a strengthened education support service.”

The aim of this paper was to outline an inclusive education and training system and how the South African Education Department intended to roll it out. It provided a framework for establishing an education and training system, detailed the funding strategy and listed the key steps to be taken in establishing an inclusive education and training system for South Africa. It sought to address the curriculum needs of learners with barriers to learning through the implementation of the Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) strategy. Its content explained how learners with barriers could access curricula. It talked about special schools to be resource centres, the formulation of District-Based Support Teams (DBST) and School-Based Support Teams (SBST). It talked about curriculum differentiation, concessions and managing extrinsic barriers (systemic) like teaching methodologies. Their audience was officials in the department of education, the schools, the educators, school pupils and their parents. This paper is relevant to this study because it talks to issues of learners with barriers

to education, which include the D/deaf learners. It is relevant to address inequalities and marginalisation of D/deaf learners in education. It talks about special schools, including schools for the deaf, which are the main sites of data collection and the focus of this study. It talks about specific support strategies for learners with disabilities in trying to give them access to education for career construction. This strategy is well known, but the delivery of the services it promises is still very slow. The DBST (District Based Support Team) and SBST (School Based Support Team) still do not represent all required professionals that were proposed to include in these teams. Shortage of personnel in the rehabilitation professions was still a challenge and crippled the teams. It seems that this white paper could not fulfil its claimed mandate of supporting the education of marginalised groups. It was later succeeded by the policy discussed below.

4.5.4. Document 4: National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS)

This policy document was published in 2014, it succeeded the white paper analysed above.

The purpose of the policy is quoted below:

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of the Policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) is to provide a policy framework for the standardisation of the procedures to identify, assess and provide programmes for all learners who require additional support to enhance their participation and inclusion in school.

SIAS was developed with the aim of introducing its strategy to update the process of noting, examining and services provision to all learners in need of extra support to improve their engagement and being part of education. An objective of note within this strategy is that of

providing clear pathway on acceptance of learners in special schools and environments. This acknowledges the pivotal role-played by caregivers and teachers. The SIAS content talks about responding to the needs of all learners who are vulnerable and most likely to be marginalised and excluded by the education system. It aims to give access to support needed by learners with barriers to learning, including those who are disabled, and for them to exercise their right to a basic education. It talks about the functions of support that the education system must play within the country. It gives clarity about the special schools to which learners should be admitted and the process of supporting their educational needs. The audience of this document is the Education Department, schools and parents. This policy is relevant to this study because it gives guidance on issues of who is admitted to special schools, including schools for the deaf. It talks about how the schools are supposed to support learners. Its implementation seems, from the observations of the researcher, to benefit learners with disabilities by placing them in suitable schools. They should benefit from those placements. The findings of the study however, seem to reveal a gap in the support of D/deaf learners, even with the availability of this policy. The policy was designed to provide the much-needed inclusion and support for education, but seemingly this still remains a challenge.

4.5.5. Document 5: National Policy pertaining to the Program and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12

This policy was published in 2012. Its aim was to guide the progression and promotion of learners from grades R-12. It stipulates the minimum requirements for progression, concessions, scales of achievement (with levels and their meaning), approved subjects, time allocations per week per subject and grade band. It guides both special schools and ordinary

public schools. This policy touches on issues of learner progression and promotion which are important for understanding how this process affects deaf learners. In the policy, there is a provision for deaf learners in each phase band. The requirements for the progression of deaf learners are lower than for hearing learners. This is related to the language barrier in teaching. This was expected to be temporary until the South African Sign Language curriculum and assessment policies had been completed and approved.

“Deaf learners, who are either in special schools in terms of section 5(6) of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act No. 84 of 1996), or those Deaf learners in ordinary schools who have been assessed and verified by a registered health professional, may obtain an Elementary Achievement (Level 2) (30—39%) in one of the two required official languages as contemplated in sub paragraphs (i), and (ii) above. Such Deaf learners may in terms of section 6(4) of the South African Schools Act, 1996 offer South African Sign Language as a language of learning and teaching in lieu of the second required official language. This will be an interim arrangement until the relevant official South African Sign Language Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements have been completed and approved.” (National Policy pertaining to the Program and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12, 2012)

The audience of this document is the Departments of Education and the schools. Parents and learners also benefit from its contents. It is relevant to this study because it clarifies how learners should be progressed or promoted from grade to grade. It also reveals an element of low expectations from the Department of Education on the performance of D/deaf learners. Instead of strengthening support to improve performance of D/deaf learners, it seems that this policy lowers the bar to facilitate progress. This matter might affect future career opportunities for these learners because it means that their education is graded at a lower scale than to hearing learners. However, it may be good to create access to and motivate D/deaf learners, but it also may be the reason why D/deaf learners said they are pushed without the required knowledge to pass to grades.

4.5.6. Document 6: Age requirements for admission to an ordinary public school

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework for the schools formulating their admission policies and age requirements for learners. The age requirements for the admission of a learner to an ordinary public school or different grades of a school are as follows: The statistical age norm per grade is the grade number plus six. Example: Grade 1 + 6 = age 7, Grade 9 + 6 = age 15 and Grade 12 + 6 = age 18.

There are no stipulated age requirements for learners who need special intervention in education who can be accepted in special schools for the public in this document; it speaks only about ordinary public schools. This is a key omission. These age requirements, and any deviations from the age norm per grade, must be applied in accordance with the Admission Policy for Ordinary Public Schools, published in the same government notice. If a learner has been admitted to a public school at an age above the age norm for a grade, such learner must, as far as possible, be placed in a fast track facility, or with his or her peer group, unless it is not in the educational interest of the learner. In the latter case, the learner must be placed in a suitable lower grade, and an accelerated program must be worked out for the learner to enable him or her to catch up with the peer group as soon as possible. A learner who is 16 years of age or older and who has never attended school and who is seeking admission for the first time or did not make sufficient progress with his or her peer group, must be advised to enrol at an Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) centre. This policy is relevant for this study because it is an admission guide and informative about the normal age of schooling in ordinary public schools. There is no policy that was found in the public available resources which specifically speaks to deaf schools. On consulting one of the Department of Education officials regarding

this, she said that each school creates its own policies of admission, based on the framework provided by the Department. However, schools have to tailor these policies to suit them. Deaf schools have specific policies informed by the government prescripts; ages of schooling in those schools are stipulated in their specific policies. These policies maybe requested from the schools at the discretion of the schools.

On analysing these policies, they seem to be comprehensive in terms of representing guiding documents on the important issue career construction and support of D/deaf learners. Although there are inconsistencies in terms of what the policy documents promise to deliver and their implementation, the focus is on exploring how these documents assist as support systems for the career construction of D/deaf learners in the Eastern Cape province. There are many Department of Education policies, including those referring to postschool education and preparing D/deaf learners for work, but the above were selected because of their close relevance to this study. Issues that came up during data collection from all participant groups relate to these six policies. This means that education and career construction and support for deaf learners is guided by these documents. Although most documents reviewed are not always specific to deaf schools, most of them do refer to deaf learners and their education. This means that the deaf are in the agenda of the education of this country. The issue of cascading this information and making it known to its intended recipients comes to mind, but is not a focus of this study; however, it would be remiss not to mention that no participant, whether learner, teacher or parent, referred to the CAPS for SASL policy. It seems that there is a vacuum in knowledge about this policy amongst its own intended audience. It is five years since it was introduced, but participants seemed unaware of it which means that its implementation has not

started. The issue of the implementation of these policies is another topic for another day. The positive factor is that guiding documents are available to address important education issues for d/Deaf learners.

4.6. Matching of findings to the objectives of the study

The findings of this study have been organised in the table below to match the original objectives of the study:

1. To describe career aspirations of deaf high school learners, their efforts towards career construction and their perspectives on how they are supported to construct them.

- Career aspirations of learners are heterogeneous, some are for white collar occupations and some for blue collar occupations.
- They are constructing careers in a climate of adversities, as there is no formalised career education system.
- Some are making an effort by doing research themselves, looking at available role models, meanwhile some seem to be hoping careers will unfold somehow while they are at school.
- They view the support they are getting towards career construction as very little or limited

2. To critically review policies and guidelines from the Department of Education that address career development of Deaf learners.

- The Department of Education's policies adequately address education needs for learners in support for career construction
- Most beneficiaries of these policies were not aware of them, especially the policy that was approved in 2014 which directly talks to education of d/Deaf learners in South African Sign Language
- Lack of knowledge of the guiding documents has created a gap in information or knowledge in all participants

3. To explore parent perspectives and their roles in supporting their deaf children in constructing future careers.

- Parents depended on the education system for career guidance of their children; although they wished they could guide, some did not have the required experience to guide and support career construction.
- Parents supported by encouraging their children to be in school, some gave them computers for career searches and some allowed them to watch television and hoped that careers would develop from what their children liked watching.
- Financial planning for supporting education after high school was inadequate or non-existent for most parents

4. To analyse the curricular and extracurricular methods to support deaf learners in constructing future careers

- The CAPS curriculum was the current curricular strategy used in education in support of future career construction
- Life Orientation was the only subject that had some content on career guidance and education. However, this subject's content was viewed as inadequate to fully support career construction
- There was no formal career education system to support career construction for d/Deaf learners and what existed was deemed inadequate by the education officials
- A skills curriculum in the pilot stage and promises an alternative to the current curriculum
- Extra-curricular activities were not utilised as alternative streams for career construction. The education system focused mainly on curricular activities.
- Sports were available but learners did not use these for developing careers due to lack of support
- There were post school career paths offered by Deaf organisations and government SETAs but the education system had no direct influence on the way they were processed

Figure 19: Summary of findings as per objectives

From the findings of the study, there were issues which emerged as affecting the career construction and support of learners. They are as follows:

<p><u>1.</u> <u>Career aspirations, construction and support of learners</u></p> <p>Learners have career aspirations and they are constructing them under adverse conditions.</p>	<p><u>2.</u> <u>The communication barrier</u></p> <p>Inability to use of South African Sign Language is a big barrier that affects communication across participants. This affects teaching, learning, support, guidance and general communication</p>	<p><u>3.</u> <u>The curriculum challenges</u></p> <p>The CAPS curriculum is a challenge for learners without adaptations, its content is difficult to translate to Sign Language by teachers. It assumes learners have prior knowledge which d/Deaf learners could be lacking. Learners, parents,, teachers and officials advocate for skills education more than academic</p>	<p><u>4.</u> <u>Support for career construction</u></p> <p>The support is insufficient because of lack of capacity from teachers, caused by a lack of adequate training, to teach d/Deaf learners, parents informal education and work experience, education system lacking programmes for d/Deaf learners</p>	<p><u>5.</u> <u>Policy</u></p> <p>Policies are in place but they seem to be unknown by intended recipients or not implemented as planned. Some policies are not favourable for d/Deaf learners as they do not consider issues of age of school entry and grade progression of learners.</p>
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Figure 20: Main issues from themes

Below is a table that shows the relationship and interaction between the study objectives, the themes and subthemes, the results and the key issues that emerged from the study. These key

issues are discussed in the next chapter. The following diagram shows where these issues emanate from. The table is a summary and therefore not all findings are represented, only the key ones are shown in the matrix:

Objectives	Themes	Findings	Key issues
1. To describe career aspirations of deaf high school learners, their efforts towards career construction and their perspectives on how they are supported to construct them.	Theme 1: Career aspirations	-Career aspirations of learners are heterogeneous.	1. Career aspirations, construction and support of learners Learners have career aspirations and they are constructing them under adverse conditions.
	Sub-themes: 1. Aspired categories of occupations 2. Career education information exposure 3. Career construction and support	-They construct careers in a climate of adversities. - No formalized career education system. -Some learners do research themselves; looking at available role models meanwhile some seem to be hoping careers will unfold somehow while they are in school. -They view the support they are getting towards career construction as very little or limited	
2. To explore parent perspectives and their roles in supporting their deaf children in constructing future careers.	Theme 2: Parental support	Parents seemed to depend on the education system for career guidance of their children, although they wished they could guide, some did not have the required experience to guide and support career construction	2. Communication barrier Inability to use South African Sign Language is a big barrier that affects communication across participants. This affects teaching, learning, support, guidance and general communication
	Sub-themes: 1. Thoughts about children's future careers 2. Parental support role for career construction 3. Opinions on children's abilities & curriculum challenges	Parents supported by encouraging their children to be in school, some gave computers for career searches and some allowed them to watch television and hoped that careers would develop from what children liked watching. Financial planning for supporting education	
			3. Curriculum challenges CAPS curriculum is a challenge for learners without adaptations; its content is difficult to translate to Sign Language by teachers. It assumes learners have prior knowledge, which d/Deaf learners lack. Learners, parents, teachers and officials advocate for skills education more than academic

		after high school was inadequate or non-existent for most parents	4. Support of learners for career construction
3. To analyse curricular and extracurricular support methods of supporting deaf learners in constructing future careers	Theme 3: Curricular support methods Subthemes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Curriculum challenges Capability of learners and placement Support 	<p>The CAPS curriculum was the current curricular strategy used in education in support of future careers construction</p> <p>Life Orientation was the only subject that had some content on career guidance and education and this subject's content was viewed as inadequate to fully support career construction</p> <p>There was no formal career education system to support career construction for d/Deaf learners and what existed was deemed inadequate by education officials</p> <p>A skills curriculum was in pilot stage and this is promising an alternative to the current curriculum</p> <p>Extra-curricular activities were not utilised as alternative streams for career construction. The education system focused mainly on curricular activities.</p>	<p>The support is insufficient because of the lack of capacity of teachers which is caused by lack of adequate training to teach d/Deaf learners, parents' informal education and work experience, education system lacking programs for d/Deaf learners</p>
	Theme 4: Extracurricular Support methods Subthemes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Extracurricular activities Post-school support 	<p>Sports were available but learners did not use these for developing careers due to lack of support</p> <p>There were post school career paths offered by Deaf organisations and government SETAs but the education system had no direct influence on those processed</p>	
4. To critically review policies and guidelines from the Department of Education that address career		<p>The Department of Education's policies adequately addressed education needs for learners in support for career construction</p> <p>It seemed that most beneficiaries of these policies</p>	4. Policy
			<p>Policies and guiding documents addressing career development of learners were available, but they seem to be unknown by intended recipients or not</p>

development of Deaf learners.	were not aware of them, especially the policy that was approved in 2014 which directly talks to education of d/Deaf learners in South African Sign Language, their home language	implemented as planned. Most policies are general to all South African learners and only some are specific to learners with disabilities including D/deaf learners
	Lack of knowledge about the guiding documents created a gap in information or knowledge in all participants	

Table 9: Key issues across objectives, themes, findings of this study

4.7. More findings worth noting, although not part of original objectives of this study

During the study, there were exciting discoveries that show government commitment and progress in education of the D/deaf. This surely brings hope to the future of d/Deaf people of South Africa and their advocates. The discoveries include:

- 💡 Deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape aspire to both white- and blue-collar occupations;
- 💡 The availability of South African Sign Language as part of CAPS;
- 💡 Inclusion of SASL as an examinable home language;
- 💡 Technical-occupational curriculum development;
- 💡 Schools for skills' development in pilot stages.

4.8. Recommendations from all participants (learners, parents, teachers and officials) on discussed topics.

During the data collection process, the participants were asked what they would like to see happening in the process of career construction and support for deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape. The following were their recommendations:



Figure 21: Recommendations of participants

4.9. The conclusion

The findings of this study are reflective of the process of engagement with all the participants, as well as the policy documents reviewed; they are a true reflection of what the participants had to say. These results also respond to all four objectives of the study. The major issues revealed by the results prove that the career construction process is a tricky process that is not well defined. One can conclude through these findings that, career construction is not happening as expected for deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province, and that the support is inadequate. Although there are policies in place to guide the process, the implementation does not indicate the expected or desired results which should be the goals of education. The support of deaf learners by parents in career construction ranges from limited to non-existent. The results also show that extracurricular methods are not used as career pathways for deaf learners. The existing curricular methods are not working well for deaf learners. However, there are processes in place to facilitate career construction. These findings have explicitly exposed the case and are further discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

5. Discussion

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the key findings presented in the previous chapter. The purpose of this discussion is to interpret and integrate the significance of the findings with existing literature in light of what was already known about the construction of careers by high school learners and to explain new insights that from this study (Frey, 2018). This discussion will aid the reader to advance from information presented in the previous chapter of findings to knowledge derived from results where things might be looked at in a new way (Evans *et al*, 2014). This chapter also responds to the original aim of this study by matching the findings with its aim (Evans *et al.*, 2014).

The research problem is explained in chapter one. The research question is, “How are careers of deaf high school learners constructed and how are they supported towards this?” The **aim** of this study has been to explore and critically analyse the career construction of deaf high school learners and the supporting strategies provided to them to achieve their career aspirations in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa.

This discussion is arranged according to the four study objectives and strives to respond to the question at hand. The same format is used to present the results in the previous chapter. Following the same format makes it easier to follow the train of the argument. Under each objective, there are interesting findings, and only the relevant findings are

discussed that answer the research problem and question. The findings vividly show the case. However, the discussion further explores them in light of the bigger picture.

From the literature reviewed in chapter two, it emerged that there is a knowledge gap concerning the career construction and supportive imperatives of deaf high school learners globally. This discussion clarifies how this study advances the understanding of the career construction of deaf learners from where it is at the end of chapter two. The theoretical framework of career construction has also shaped this discussion as a point of reference. Career construction theory states that careers do not unfold by themselves, they are actively created by individuals in interaction with the environment and the society they live in. These findings are discussed to unfold the case of career construction by deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa in 2018-2019. The discussion focuses on the two elements of the career construction theory: the active career construction by learners themselves and the interaction of this process with the environment or the society they live in. The process is dependent on the learners and the society; the environment is the supporting component of the process of career construction, the enabling component for the process.

5.2. Career aspirations, construction and support of D/deaf learners

D/deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province had career aspiration in both white and blue-collar occupations. Careers were constructed under adverse conditions, which led to perceived limited support by the learners.

The literature indicates that South African students craft career trajectories in a challenged economic environment where high unemployment and multiple affirmative action

policies exist, with an aim to amend past employment inequalities (Davis *et al.*, 2014). This situation poses a huge unemployment threat, especially to people with disabilities. There are many obstacles to making career choices for learners in South African , including poverty, which leads to a lack of funding for aspired careers; child-headed homes, which lead to poor school enrolments and progress and lack of role models (Chuong & Oprario, 2012). The labour trend for the Eastern Cape is that only 7.88 % of the population is employed in professional careers, the rest are employed in technical , partial -skilled and occupations that do not require special skills, or they are unemployed (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Seventy percent of the unemployed in South Africa are young people aged between 14 and 35 (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Learners enrolled in high schools fall within this age group where there is huge unemployment. This glimpse of literature draws attention to two important issues in the context of the learners. The first is the unfavourable economic climate of South Africa, characterised by lack of employment generally. Secondly, the lack of employment hits people living with disabilities even harder because of limiting disability-related barriers to aspired career choices. The general lack of employment reduces morale with regard to education as people are not motivated to study further because their chances of getting employment are slim, even with education. This thought often discourages people with disabilities even more, because of the amount of effort that they have to put in to get a suitable education. Careers are constructed in this context and strong support structures are very important in such conditions.

Although the South African government has shown a firm commitment, through their policies, to empower people living with disabilities to be active in their communities, many barriers still exist to their entry to a full work force (Cramm *et al.*, 2013). Addressing career needs early,

while the young people are constructing their future careers may assist in curbing unemployment.

A study conducted on intercultural collaborating for the benefit of South African Township high school students, which collected data on students' perceptions of career choice barriers which prohibited students from engaging in their careers of choice, and their general hopefulness found that students were hopeful about their future, despite barriers to career choices (Dordge & Welderufael, 2014). The study also concluded that occupational deprivation was a risk factor for South African youth living in disadvantaged communities (Dordge & Welderufael (2014). The findings of this study coincide with the results emerging from the current study. The learners under study were also seen to be aspiring for future careers. Although their aspirations were in both streams of occupations and some of those aspirations could have been just aspirations and not achievable, they wished for a brighter future and were hopeful that the education they were getting would lead them to their aspired future careers.

These findings are unlike those from a study of deaf high school students' vocational interests and attitudes, conducted abroad, which found that deaf students scored lower in education- and culture- related vocational interest scales than hearing students. The study further found that in attitude, deaf students showed lower levels of ambition and skills development than hearing students (Cawthon & Garberoglio, 2017). Some of the Deaf learners in the Eastern Cape also showed a desire for careers in non-academic fields.

The connection of schooling to the larger society is where career development is rooted (Webb *et al.*, 2014). This connection is important for learners to understand the relevance between

what they learn in school, their future and the world at large (Repetto & Andrews, 2012). Career guidance should be an intricate component of the educational system and plays an important role in making educational offerings accessible to individuals. In the education of deaf learners in the Eastern Cape, career guidance seemed to be lacking and this could be one of the factors leading to career aspirations that may be too low or too high. This could be one of the adversities that the learners are faced with.

The research study conducted in North West Province Schools in South Africa on Life Orientation (LO) concludes that the high school curriculum for the learning of the world of work does not adequately introduce careers to South African Youth (Watson *et al.*, 2010). Another study conducted in South Africa, shows that the guidance received in LO programs seems either inadequate or not applied correctly (Naude, 2014). This study further notes that it was apparent that not enough was done to prepare learners for life after school.

Career planning continues not to get the attention it needs. Until a strategy is developed in schools to inform, guide and evaluate learners to make decisions that fit their potential, capabilities and interests, the problem of uninformed students, lacking dedication and focus will remain with us (Naude, 2014).

Another study, conducted on hearing learners, which looked at grade 10 learner suggestions on measures that could be taken to enhance LO with specific reference to career guidance, conducted in the Mangaung area of the Free State Province of South Africa, suggests improved linkage between subjects and career choices and enhanced focus on careers in class. It further

suggests that the extension of information to a greater variety of careers be used as a point of departure in facilitating discussions between work and school communities (Jonck, 2015).

The findings of the current study reveal that one of the challenges in career construction of D/deaf learners was deprivation of career-related information in their schooling. This referred to the content of LO. What the participants of the current study said concurs with the studies conducted in other provinces of South Africa. In order to ensure occupational choice in South Africa, it is important to understand the perspectives of students themselves and the barriers they face in relation to career choices in their communities (Davis *et al.*, 2014).

A study conducted in the United States of America on college and career readiness course-taking of deaf and hard-of-hearing secondary school students found that deaf and hard-of-hearing students frequently entered college and the workplace relatively unprepared for success in Mathematics, Science and Reading (Nagle *et al.*, 2016). Deaf and hard-of-hearing students tended to take courses which were vocational and non-academic. Few took Science courses. Deaf or hard-of-hearing students studying Mathematics showed a greater lack of rigour than did hearing students (Nagle *et al.*, 2016). One of the viewpoints of the researcher in the current study, backed up by literature, is that “deafness” alone does not mean academic inability or cognitive inability. Why, then, are deaf learners not taking subjects and following career streams that are more academic? Why are they mainly in blue-collar occupations? These questions are what have led to exploring the process of career construction. The study by Nagle *et al.* (2016), mentioned above, found unpreparedness for Mathematics in a similar group of students. Similarly, a study conducted by the National Institute for the Deaf in South Africa, mentioned in the literature review chapter, also observed the same tendency (NID, 2010). This

unpreparedness for post-school education was explained by reasons given by the learners in the current study. If learners are unprepared for post-school education, for whatever reason, they cannot be visible in careers requiring post-school education or in white-collar occupations because most of them do not continue to education beyond high school.

The current study found that career awareness skills were not packaged for the education of the D/deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province. An international study of exceptional children found that students who exited secondary school with increased career awareness skills were more likely to be engaged in post school employment (Benz *et al.*, 1997). This lack of career awareness may impact how careers are constructed.

A national education reform program in South Korea, focusing on the active participation of students in planning and training for future careers, has been launched across the country at junior secondary school level (Park *et al.*, 2018). With this initiative, positive results were reported where student participation in school-based career development courses resulted in increased career development skills. When students had a clear idea of their career goals, they were more likely to engage in academic tasks seen important in achieving those goals (Park *et al.*, 2018). This study was conducted in general schools and not particularly in schools for the D/deaf, but the strategy of introducing career education early in schooling years, might help in improving career education and decisions made by South African learners.

The conclusion drawn with regard to the first objective of this study is that deaf learners in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa aspire to both blue-collar and white-collar careers. They do not construct careers as one would expect of school going learners due to the reasons

discussed above. They are not fully supported in the process of career construction by the education system through the curriculum, language of communication both at school and at home and they lack role models in white-collar occupations. Aspirations alone without support to achieve them cannot lead to career construction. Below is a diagram to assist in explaining this fact. It shows what should be happening according to the thoughts of the researcher.



Figure 22: What the researcher thinks should be happening during career construction.

However, the results of the current study show a different picture. A different picture resulting from valid reasons in the context of the learners under study. Below is the diagram showing what was happening at the time of the study.



Figure 23: What the researcher sees happening in this study

5.3. The communication barrier

Inability to use of South African Sign Language is a big barrier that affects communication across participants (learners, teachers, Department of Education officials and parents). This affects teaching, learning, support, guidance and general communication.

This study discovered that the used of different modes of communication between learners and parents, teachers and officials causes a huge barrier, which compromised both the construction of careers by learners and their possible support for career construction. Parents could not communicate in South African Sign Language, which was the communication language their children used. Teachers also expressed insufficient skill to communicate educational content in South African Sign Language. This led to minimum engagement with learners and subsequently, insufficient support for career construction.

Communication is important for making contact, reaching out to others, satisfying our needs, revealing feelings, sharing information and accomplishing so many things (Owens et.al., 2015). When there is a barrier in communication, it is impossible to fulfil communication needs. We use language to communicate. Language is a socially shared code used to represent concepts (Owens *et al.*, 2015). When we do not share the same language, it is challenging to communicate effectively. A barrier in language, which is a code for communication, means there is less effective communication. Communication between learners, teachers, parents and Department of Education officials was ineffective, in this case study, because of language differences. In developmental milestones, the development of language is key. It involves a

series of its own steps like bodily growth for being able to express it, cognitive preparedness to receive and interpret it, availability of good language models to imitate and practice with and also for encouragement and guidance (Ritonga & Sofyani, 2018). For the deaf learners under study, some important language precursors did not happen.

Language is used to communicate concepts for learning in schools. Language development in early childhood is important for early learning and developing social skills (Owens, 2014). Children learn language first and later use the language to learn in school. This is normal development in terms of milestones (Owens, 2014). For these D/deaf learners' language does not develop according to the norms stated in the literature. They do not develop language early before they go to school. They only learn Sign Language when they are admitted to school. The late identification of D/deaf children negatively affects their language acquisition and spills over to their learning and education.

International research has shown that adolescents communicate most frequently about career issues with their parents (Otto, 2000, cited in Michael, Cinnamon & Most, 2015). Parents are a major influence during the educational and career transition because they serve as a continuous, persistent and stable resource for their children throughout their lives (Trask-Tate & Cunningham, 2010). In the case of the current study, the inability of parents to use a common language negatively influences the impact of learners engaging with parents in the process of career construction.

A South African study, conducted on the possibility of including Deaf learners in institutions of Further Education and Training (FETs) that accommodate all students making use of services

of a South African Sign Language interpreters, re-visited the importance of language in the education of Deaf students. It reported on progressive policy changes in the areas of language, education and disability in South Africa. The findings of this study concluded that there was a need to train interpreters and educators in linguistic forms and teaching methods to the benefit all learners in their classes, inclusive of Deaf students (Glaser & van Pletzen, 2012). This study highlights the importance of language for the education of deaf learners and the need for training of both teachers and Sign Language interpreters in ways of teaching deaf learners. It coincides with the findings that highlight the need and importance of a common language of communication in teaching and learning.

Moreover, according to teachers, the CAPS curriculum requires learners to use prior knowledge, which deaf learners often do not have. Learners do not have this knowledge because they have no way of learning some concepts because of their lack of language. The presence of hearing loss in children impacts their overall language and educational outcomes (Blaiser & Shannahan, 2018). During early speech and language development, children learn skills that are important to the development of literacy (reading and writing). The same thing goes for native Sign Language users. Learning happens even before children are in schools (Owens, 2014). Late school placement of learners, caused by late identification and late language acquisition that affected prior learning negatively affects their acquisition of knowledge. Parents labelled CAPS as difficult for their children. Parents pointed out that, if the learner could not progress academically, with skills training they could at least gain skills and when they left school they would be able to make a living out of those skills. Parents emphasised that their children were good at skills and could learn better through skills

education. The officials mentioned that the lack of career guidance during the high school phase affected subject choices which guides or influence future career streams.

A study conducted in Uganda on parent involvement in the inclusion of deaf children in primary schools, reveals an important social forum for parents to learn more about deafness, their children's development and sign language (Miles *et al.*, 2011). Initiatives of this nature may assist parents of deaf learners in learning about their children and Sign Language, and this could improve parental contributions to the career construction of their children.

5.4. The curriculum challenges

The study found that learners, parents, teachers and officials preferred skills' education to academic education. Without adaptations, the CAPS curriculum was described to be a challenge for deaf learners; its content is difficult to translate to Sign Language by teachers and its assumptions that learners have prior knowledge were not relevant to the D/deaf learners.

The curricula methods focused on two issues that are the points of discussion in this part: subject content and its delivery methods and extra curricula focusing on other school-based activities that could open occupational paths for learners, even though they are not examinable. These curricula challenges formed part of the exploration and description of the context in which careers are constructed, and the environment and the resources available for constructing the careers.

On curricular methods, Life Orientation (LO) is the curricular vehicle that hosts or delivers career education content, and it does not effectively open opportunities for adequate career construction education for deaf learners. Education officials and school principals perceived career education in schools as meeting the career development needs of learners. Learners too, perceived career education in schools as meeting their career development needs. LO educators thought that the career education covered does not meet the career development needs of learners. Some of the gaps and challenges identified by participants were a lack of educators dedicated solely to career guidance, a lack of a national career guidance structures and policies, a lack of a career counselling services and a lack of appreciation of the role of the school in career decision-making. In addition, parental and community influence and the elusive role of LO and its educators in career education delivery in schools were identified as challenges. The study recommends making Career Guidance a stand-alone subject in schools by, among other things, appointing Career Development Educators. Some findings of the studies in literature review above are in harmony with the current findings, except the fact that the learners in the study were hearing and, in this study, the learners are D/deaf. Their perception, and understanding, of subject content are different. The sentiments on parental influence also resonate with this study.

Career education and guidance have become cornerstone measures to prepare learners holistically for the demands of the contemporary workforce (DBE, 2011; Jonck & Swanepoel, 2015). Career Guidance programs should aim at developing essential skills for life and work (Dabula & Makura, 2013). Career Guidance programs should promote social justice and redress (Sefotho, 2017). These programs should be embedded in the curriculum. If the

curriculum does not address career education related information, then education will have failed to meet its mission. Social justice and redress will never be realised, particularly by the community of people living with disabilities in South Africa. The current study reveals that career guidance programs are not an integral part of the education of D/deaf learners in the Eastern Cape Province.

The need for providing career education in schools seems to be rising worldwide (Tristianingsih, 2018). The South Korean Ministry of Education is placing more emphasis on career education interventions through the school counselling system to improve learners' career awareness (Choi *et al.*, 2015). Recently, in China, Career Guidance has been introduced during the elementary school years (ages 7 to 12), in order to facilitate career development in later years (Liu *et al.*, 2014). In Malaysia and Lebanon, they have introduced school counsellors with training in school guidance and counselling. Ordinary educators no longer conduct Career Guidance. They have also introduced a school Guidance and Counselling Programme (GCP), which includes career development (Talib *et al.*, 2015; Khansa, 2015). Indonesia is strengthening vocational education and introducing vocational high schools (VHS), the equivalent of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in South Africa (Tristianingsih, 2018). In the African region as well, provisioning of career education is rising. In Nigeria, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of vocational skills and vocational education for personal and national development. Hence, its incorporation into the secondary school curriculum (Adewale *et al.*, 2017).

Further literature reveals that other countries that employ the curriculum-based model, such as the United Kingdom's Kent model, place more value on career education than does South

Africa (Hooley & Dodd, 2015). The study conducted by Hooley and Dodd in 2015, reveals that the United Kingdom employs full-time career educators whose sole duty is career education in the schools. Some schools have more than one career educator. There is no doubt that the same practice could enhance career education in South Africa.

Special needs education coordinators in Uganda, who have been through teacher education training, and also undergone special education training and some, but not all, also developed professional abilities related to the teaching of deaf children. (Musyoka *et al.*, 2017). However, the emphasis on deaf education modules in teacher training has primarily been on teaching basic Sign Language skills, although the ability levels of teachers differ considerably; many already possess a diploma in Special Needs Education (Musyoka *et al.*, 2017). This approach to training of teachers, especially those working with deaf learners and learners with other special needs, working either as teachers or as department of education professionals, could assist in increasing the capacity for the Department of Education to accommodate deaf learners' educational needs in South Africa. Another study on perceptions of teacher preparedness to teach deaf and hard-of-hearing students with additional disabilities has recommended that teacher preparation programs for these learners should review their curricula and provide knowledge and skills that these specific teachers need in the classroom. These would assist the teachers in adapting the subject content delivery to suit their learners.

The challenges that exist in the education system in terms of deaf learners seem to be a national occurrence and are not unique to the Eastern Cape. At a national level, challenges include policy implementation, teacher training and curriculum adaptation and learner assessment, to mention a few (Parkin, 2010). In Parkin's study, teachers reported that they do not have

training that prepared them for teaching D/deaf learners. These national challenges that emerged from Parkin's study are similar to the results of this study; this brought confidence in the current study results because the Eastern Cape Province shares the same educational context. Although no similar studies have been carried out in other provinces for comparison, the national trends appear to be similar.

Research has shown, however, that involvement in extracurricular activities is connected to gains in academic performance. Adolescent participation in extracurricular activities has been shown to have a positive correlation with school involvement and self-esteem among teenagers, academic achievement and youth advancement (Massoni, 2011). In terms of behaviour, good marks, academic success, positive aspects of being independent adults, and social concern, extracurricular activities have such many positive impacts on education (Massoni, 2011). Participation in extracurricular activities offers students with and without disabilities with advantages, such as opportunities to “practice social skills, explore career and other interests, apply what they are learning in the classroom, meet new classmates, foster personal development, and strengthen everyday life skills” (Carter *et al.*, 2010). All these studies show with certainty the importance of extracurricular activities in education and the positive effects thereof, but they fail to reveal that both non-disabled and disabled learners use them as stepping stones towards career construction.

The focus of current legislative and policy efforts has been to prepare youth, with and without disabilities, for the world of work. Improved studies and practice has been suggested to train young people with disabilities for future jobs (Cater *et al.*, 2010). The opportunities provided by exposure to extracurricular programs have always been minimised for students with

disabilities and this negatively affects their development in academia, work and in general society. Educators and administrators must consider the value of inclusive extracurricular activities and how such programs can be effectively implemented (Wehman, 2014).

In equipping them for their future careers, the experiences that young people have during high school are particularly significant. It is necessary to intensify efforts to ensure that high schools have experiences and meaningful opportunities for all students to prepare them for the job world. The limited participation in these interactions and opportunities by young people with disabilities indicates that Among educators , parents or even young people with disabilities themselves, low employment-related aspirations may continue to be prevalent . Additional initiatives are required to design high school environments that substantially integrate comprehensive curriculum with specific learning experiences to ensure that young people with disabilities are able to fulfil their career-related goals for life after high school (Cater, 2010).

In this province, extra-curriculum activities are not utilized as a pathway for career construction. The education system in the province did not have a structured form of career guidance, either curriculum or non-curriculum related. However, this study appreciates other efforts to open career opportunities for D/deaf learners, like those opened through DEAFSA; (NID); E-DEAF; the schools' after care programs and some government department learnership programs. These appeared as the only possible career construction routes available to deaf learners in the province. For learners who could not be absorbed into these available routes, the only option was to go home and live on government disability grants. The nagging concerns on the mind of the researcher are, "Is this all that education for deaf children in the province has to offer? Could all of this mean that D/deaf learners are not seen in society as

important contributors to the world of work?” “Is the education system for deaf children fully exploring the potential of these learners?”

“The most challenging part of being involved in the field of Deaf education in South Africa, especially as a Deaf person and a Deaf teacher, is knowing that Deaf learners, for the most part, are fully capable of achieving the same educational outcomes expected of any other learner but are, frustratingly, not currently achieving equal outcomes in an atmosphere of low expectations, and are perceived by the system as not being able to do so” (Parkin, 2010).

The sentiments of the above quotation are fully aligned to those of the researcher. Although personally not d/Deaf, she believes that d/Deaf people have the same academic ability as hearing people, where there is no other related disability. The potential of D/deaf learners is compromised by the limited curricular and extra-curricular applications of career construction. There is a potential that needs to be unleashed in D/deaf learners, both in academic and non-academic routes of career construction.

5.5. Support of learners for career construction

The findings reveal that the support is insufficient because of many issues, including the lack of capacity of teachers, caused by inadequate training to teach d/Deaf learners; parents’ informal education and work experience; the education system with insufficient programs for D/deaf learners and financial problems.

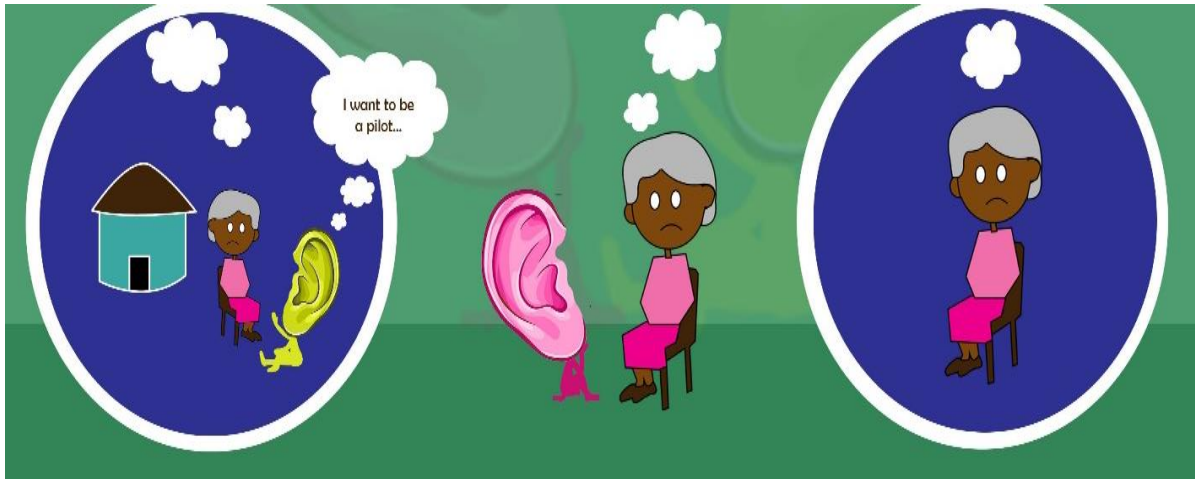


Figure 24: A graphic representation of support challenges for career construction

The parents who participated in this study mostly had no formal occupational or educational background. Their circumstances and realities are different from what general literature suggests. For many of the parents the issue of career construction was an unfamiliar subject hence, it seemed to be shifted to being the responsibility of the education system. Parents were not clear as to how they could support their children in their career construction.

Literature reviewed earlier in chapter two clearly states the importance of parental guidance and support for the career construction of learners. Parents play an important role in adolescents' career development processes (Michael *et al.*, 2015). The study explored career-related parental support for adolescents with hearing problems, relationships with the expectations of parents and occupational status showed that multiple types of expectations led to career-related parental assistance. Moreover, the occupational status of parents leads to the standards of achievement in the career growth of their children (Michael., 2015).

In a study on parents' perspectives on transition and post-secondary outcomes for their children who are d/Deaf or hard-of-hearing, it was suggested by findings that parents expect more from their children than children with hearing loss have historically been able to achieve (Cawthon *et al.*, 2014). It was further explained that these high expectations might fuel the potential of d/Deaf children to achieve better in their post-secondary outcomes. In another study (Wehman *et al.*, 2015), it was found that high school work exposure and parental aspirations of post-high school work were the best predictors of a successful process of transition. The results highlight two critical aspects of success to the transition process: high school employment history, and high parental ambitions of the future of their children. Low expectations are a common issue raised for children with disability, as well as for children in poor environments.

The current study results show that parents prefer skills education and do not trust the success of their children in an academic curriculum, hence, the assumption that their expectations for their children's career choices were not set high. The study mentioned above suggests that low parental expectations may not fuel the learners' potential to strive for white-collar occupation career construction. In the literature review in chapter two, the American Department of Education claimed that deaf learners must be held to high expectations in their education in order to improve their achievements. Maybe if parents expected more of their children it would unleash their potential to achieve better, even in academic curricula.

The officials, on the other hand, admitted that the Department of Education's support is not at the level it should be. Although the Department has employed Sign Language interpreters for deaf schools to assist the teachers by interpreting during teaching, has started the pilot for schools of skills, has piloted winter school for deaf learners with scripted lessons, there is still

more that needs to be done to support deaf learners, for example, the capacitation of Department officials to address the challenges encountered by D/deaf schools and the accommodation of D/deaf schools' language of communication.

Although the global literature makes suggestions for improving the current state of support, there is a paucity of local literature in the searched databases on local studies on this subject. This has limited the discussion of this objective to the suggestions made outside of the South African context.

5.6. The policy issues

The study found that policies are available, but seemingly unknown by intended recipients or not implemented as planned. Most policies are general to all South African learners and only some are specific to learners with disabilities, including D/deaf learners.

The results show that the six policies reviewed Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement [CAPS], White Paper 6, National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support [SIAS], National Policy pertaining to the program and promotion requirements of the national curriculum statement grades and age requirements for admission to an ordinary public school policy and The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for the South African Sign Language [SASL] Grades R-12), were comprehensive in terms of giving clear guidance on important issues in education and for this study. These policies of the Department of Education were selected because of their close relevance to this study. Issues that were raised by participants through the data collection related to these policies. Not all of these policies were specific to deaf schools but most of them referred to deaf learners and their education.

However, one policy was specific to the education of deaf learners. The Department of Basic Education made great strides in 2010, when it developed a policy for the education of deaf learners. This meant that deaf learners are in the agenda for education in this country. The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for the South African Sign Language (SASL) Grades R-12, which were completed and approved as policy in July 2014, were developed. The minister of Basic Education said in her foreword of this ground-breaking document, “For a long time, learners who are Deaf were persistently marginalised as they had been deprived of a home language, resulting in their education not being one of quality. This has impacted the extent of their retention within the system and their opportunities of studying further up to and including higher education institutions” (Department of Basic Education, 2014). This policy is the crux of matters of educating deaf learners in South Africa. It dissolves many barriers to education for deaf learners, as one of the main challenges of educating deaf learners has been language. The language of communicating content in classrooms is very important for both teaching and learning. Language is key to education. In the same document, language was defined as a tool for thought and communication (Department of Basic Education, 2014). It is a cultural and aesthetic method widely used by individuals to make a better sense of the world in which they live. Effectively learning to use language helps learners to gain knowledge, communicate their personality, emotions and thoughts, interact with others and navigate their environment. It provides a rich, strong and deeply rooted collection of images and ideas for learners to use further. This policy provides an espoused bedrock of linguistic support for deaf education in South Africa. Many learners complained about the communication barrier in teaching and learning, and this policy should serve to curb that gap.

However, it is unknown whether these policies were known and available to all intended recipients, as it seemed there was a knowledge gap among some of the participants of the contents of the policies. It was also not established whether these policies had been implemented or not, or how, if they had been implemented, as this was not the main interest of the study. The good news is that the policies are there somewhere, although it is not known whether the implementers are adequately skilled to implement them. The gap between the policy availability and implementation was evident.

From a study in Ireland (Patrick & Jim, 2014) on the daily experiences of oralism and Irish Sign Language of children, using ethnographic interviews and an observational approach, data generated narrative understandings of how deaf schooling experiences of children served as a cauldron for the creation of time , space and relationships for individual and collective self-expression, cultural creation and reproduction of the secret lore and interpretation of Irish Sign Language and advancement of the hidden curriculum of Sign Language within an oralist-dominated policy and practice context. The study ends with guidelines for creating a sign bilingual curriculum through Ireland's full spectrum and educational sequence. Their study shows that the issue of language policies in curriculum is not unique to the South African context, but is a concern in other countries around the world

In deaf education, the function of language is a critical concern (Hunt & Compton, 2012). Their analysis of policy documents governing education in Sweden and the United States found the following: In Swedish and United States education policies, tracing language in education preparation for sign languages highlights the ways in which education policies discuss how to

help students engage in society, what languages to teach deaf students and what languages to grow for communication (Hunt & Compton, 2012).

The Preamble to the Constitution of South Africa states that the aim of the Constitution is to mend past differences and create a society founded on democratic values, social justice and basic human rights; to make life better among all citizens and liberate each person's potential; to build a base for a representative and transparent society where the government depends on the desire of the people and all residents are important; and eventually, to create a united and democratic South Africa that can take its rightful place in the community of nations as a sovereign state (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The constitution further states that education and the curriculum have an important role to play in realising these aims. Over time, the Ministry of Education has introduced a series of national curricular strategies. Those curricular strategies did not accommodate the specific educational needs of deaf learners in South Africa. This means that deaf learners had always been marginalised by the education system until the year 2010, when the Department of Education undertook the development of Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) for the South African Sign Language (SASL) Grades R-12. These were completed and approved as policy in July 2014. The provision of the constitution refers to every South African citizen, including those who are disabled. The Ministry of Education has aligned itself with the provision of the constitution in this regard, and that is noted with joy. Although it took a long time for the deaf to be accommodated, at least they are finally considered in policy formulation circles of education.

The literature on education policies for the deaf, worldwide, has paid a lot of attention to the issue of language. It is clear that language is of utmost importance in education and career construction. This point of discussion clarifies that, like other countries, South Africa has its language policy defined in reference to education of deaf learners. This means that deaf education has a supporting bedrock of an education language policy, although its implementation is unknown at this stage.

5.7 Thesis Building

5.7.1. The approach to thesis building

The researcher adopted an approach to thesis building which uses the critical question of the study, as outlined in the introduction chapter, as a point of departure for building the argument (Oliver, 2004). The aim of this study has been to explore and critically analyse how careers of D/deaf high school learners are constructed and the support strategies provided to them to achieve their career aspirations. The synthesis of the theoretical framework, literature review and findings of the study have been used to develop new knowledge and to build the statements that this thesis argues. The synthesis of these three tools gives direction to the way the argument arises. Although there has no straight answer to the research question, the aim of the study, to explore and critically analyse the phenomena, has been achieved.

5.7.2 The theoretical lens

Career construction theory explores the way human constructivism and social constructionism constructs the career world (Savickas, 2005). It emphasises that individuals make representations of reality but do not make reality itself. This meaning individuals construct

themselves, but this self construction is influenced by the context where it happens (Brown & Lent, 2013). The career construction theory fits this study as it views careers from a contextualist perspective, which views construction as driven by adaptation to the context rather than maturation of inner structures. This means that the theory considers that the context influences the way individuals construct careers and how this enhances or reduces individual constructionism (Brown & Lent, 2013).

The researcher chose data collection and interpretation carrying this lens, in a quest to find how careers are constructed in the context of the Eastern Cape Province by this specific group of D/deaf individuals.

5.7.3. The suggestions of the findings

The findings suggest that both individual and social constructivism takes place. However, the contextual platform where the construction takes place has challenges which have proved to be greater than the opportunities for successful construction of careers by the D/deaf learners.

The context in which the theory of career construction was developed, both in terms of era and political history, is different from the context in which this study took place. The theory of career construction was developed in the Global North, a context where there was no history of colonisation and therefore, resources and opportunities for career construction were available, whereas in the Global South, where this study was conducted, the context is defined by the adverse effects of historic colonisation. Global colonialism resulted in the oppression of the economy and the general development of the Global South (Mignolo, 2011). Its goals were

to exploit, dominate, expropriate and exterminate people and resources of the Global South (Maldonado-Torres, 2018).

The context of this study is characterised by consistently insufficient resources and opportunities for career construction, especially for the minority population of the D/deaf black people. In South Africa, particularly the Eastern Cape Province, the era of this study is post colonial and post apartheid. However, the effects of previous colonisations are still evident in resource availability and opportunities for career construction. The constructionism that the theory refers to assumes that the individuals and the society have the capabilities they need to construct and support careers, but the reality of the context of this study is that both the individuals and the society may not have the capacity to construct or support careers due to the challenges suggested by the findings of the study. This is evident from the existence of challenges at all fronts: financial, social and systemic. Financial challenges refer to the lack of material resources which would enable career construction. Social challenges refer to the structures which should provide pillars of support, including support of linguistic matters. Finally, systemic challenges refer to the education system and includes curricula and personalised choices to make career decisions. These multifaceted socio-economic challenges are a result of the political history associated with previous colonisation and influence the process of career construction by this particular group of people in this region at this point in time. The colonial era is supposed to have passed, but its existence is still identifiable everywhere (Maldonado-Torres, 2018). Its effects can be associated with the findings of this study. People of the Global South are making history under circumstances they have not chosen (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014). Africans are struggling to create African futures in a context of

global colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014). D/deaf learners in the Eastern Cape Province are constructing future careers, struggling against a context which has resulted from a history of global colonialism and of the previous apartheid in South Africa. What these findings reflect are the realities of the effects of the history of black human kind imposed by the man-made supremacy of the Global North against the Global South (Mignolo, 2011).

The same study however, is evident of positive influences to career construction in the same context. The D/deaf learners have shown career aspirations, which meant that they had career optimism. Career optimism is the tendency of individuals to be positive about future career possibility and this is strengthened by supportive environments (Garcia et al., 2015). Career optimism has been found by prior studies to positively influence career construction (Garcia et al., 2015).

The support of parents was another positive influencer of career construction amongst these learners. The positive social support spirit of parents cultivated a sense of progress in future construction of careers by learners. Although there were contextual challenges and limitations, parents expressed their support in the best possible ways that they knew and could. Parents are an important source of support particularly in career construction stage because it builds one's self concept in relation to career-decision (Garcia et al., 2011). Parental support is positively associated with career decision-making and self efficacy (Guan et al., 2016).

The support from the education system from the provincial department to the classroom was another positive influencer. These included the availability of policies which guide the education of D/deaf learners. Although the implementation of these policies is still not obvious,

but atleast there is evidence that the government, through the education system is in a process to redress negative impact of colonisation and apartheid on the education sytem especially for people with deafness (Department of Edcuation, 2001). These policies are a positive influence in the contextual landscape of this matter. Specific supports like this one of education system shape individuals confidence in making career related decisions and enhances a positive hope and expectations of his or her future career (Higgins et.al.,2010). Positive relationship between parental support, education system support and individual optisim lead to positive career construction (Garcia et. al., 2015).

The involvement of the advocacy groups and organisations of D/deaf people by being vocal and active in challenging the status quo of the education of D/deaf people and their influence in these matters positively contributes to how the new generation of D/deaf learners constructs their careers. This active role of advocacy groups and organisations of D/deaf people also create awareness in both the government and communities and this has positive influence on career construction of learners in this context.

5.7.4. The new knowledge from the study

The impact of the previous colonialism and apartheid in South Africa, particularly in the Eastern Cape negatively influences the career construction of D/deaf learners in this environment.

Specific support systems like those of parents and the education system, although limited, positively influence the way learners construct their future careers in this case study.

This case study is a first-time study in this area in the field of disability studies, career construction of D/deaf learners in the Eastern Cape Province. There is no documented information of this nature in this context that the researcher was able to uncover. The avenues for future research that this study opens in this field may be new.

5.7.5. The thesis statement / argument

The thesis of the study is that the contextual challenges and limited support structures negatively influence the way D/deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province construct their future careers. The parents, the education system system and the role played by organisations of Deaf people positively influence the way D/deaf high school learner construct their future careers. The findings of the study, the theory of career construction and literature play an exceptional part in generating concepts of contextual influence, the role of support structures and individual constructionism in the process of future career construction by D/deaf learners in this province.

THESIS BUILD UP SUMMARY

Theory

Career construction theory addresses how the career world is crafted through individual constructivism and social constructionism (Savickas, 2005). It emphasizes that individuals make representations of reality but do not make reality itself. It emphasises that careers do not unfold; they are constructed as individuals make choices that express their self-concepts and substantiate their goal in the social reality of work roles.

Data

Individual constructivism and social constructionism evidence
However, the contextual conditions under which this construction is happening are adverse.

• How are they constructing careers?

Positive influencers:-

Aspirations of learners, support from parents and the system of education, and guidance from policy documents

Negative influencers:-

The context where careers are constructed, limited support structures, curriculum, language barrier, socio-economic factors

New knowledge

The positive and negative influencers of career construction of D/deaf learners in the Eastern Cape Province.

-The influence of the context to career construction of D/deaf learners.

-This case study is ground breaking in the field of disability studies, career construction of Deaf learners in the Eastern Cape Province as far as the researcher is concerned.

-The avenues for future research that this study opens are new

The study accepts the theory of career construction, but the application of this theory in this context should take caution of the adversities of D/deaf learners when applied in this context. The reality which the theory says people construct seems to play a huge role in influencing how careers are constructed in this province. It is this context that shapes how careers are constructed in this particular case.

Figure 25: A summary of thesis building

5.8 The study response to the phenomenon

The main question of this research is: “How do D/deaf high school learners construct their careers and how are they supported?” The study has responded to the critical question through unfolding the manner in which D/deaf high school learners construct their careers, in this case, in the Eastern Cape Province, and has explored the existing support that they receive towards constructing their careers. It has shown that careers are constructed in a context of both positive and negative influences and that the negative influences still impact more heavily on career construction than do the positive influences. D/deaf learners in the Eastern Cape have limited opportunities to pursue higher education in colleges and universities because of the way the education system and society prepare them for future careers. Hence, they are mostly not employed in white-collar occupations.

The research problem was identified through the observations of the researcher as an audiologist and rehabilitation services practitioner in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa, where most deaf people were not employed in the formal labour market after schooling. They were observed to be either unemployed or in menial jobs. They have not been observed in careers regarded as professional. However, there was no empirical evidence to determine why the deaf were excluded from the formal labour market after schooling. Understanding the underlying factors influencing such observations was important to design intervention strategies.

This study does not offer direct solutions to the existing problem, but as a case study, the information it reveals could be used to inform policies and practices that would in future improve the currently existing social problem. It offers avenues of approach towards solving the problem. The broader social problem is the unemployment of D/deaf people in professional occupations. This appears to be exclusion of this particular group of people in certain categories of occupations, those that are rated as high paying. This has led to dependence on government grants and may negatively influence the perception of the intellectual abilities of D/deaf people, despite their having been through the education system. The study did not bring a direct solution to this broader social problem, but it offers beacons of departure for policy makers and service providers towards solving the problem. The study also draws the attention of potential problem solvers to an awareness of this social problem affecting this specific group of population.

5.9. The implications of the study

5.9.1. Implications for the context

The Eastern Cape Province is the second poorest province in South Africa (Stats SA, 2011). Before 1994, it was mainly a black homeland, characterised by poverty, unemployment. To this day, it remains underdeveloped. It is important to find ways of redressing the inequalities in our society (Department of Education, 2001). Deaf learners in this province need education to guide them towards constructing careers that will improve their historic disadvantage. Education prepares individuals for future engagement in the labour market which directly affects their quality of life (Stats SA, 2011).

The historic disadvantage, caused by the previous colonisation, led to the Eastern Cape being the second poorest Province in South Africa and this has resulted in compromised quality of education, especially for people with disabilities. The information that this study brings may influence government endeavours to redress these contextual inequalities, from the result of political influences. The study exposes that the support for career construction is negatively influenced by the context in which these learners are living. The lack of early identification and intervention services caused by lack of resources within the province influences their foundational skills for education and has affected the capabilities of some learners. The late identification has led to late language acquisition, which influences learning and literacy skills. The limited choices of educational curriculum streams also influences the way careers are constructed. The D/deaf learners are limited to the streams the education system in the province offers. If these learners lived in a different context, their career construction and support would be different. In addressing these contextual challenges, this study assists in highlighting the barriers which are a result of the political context, hopefully breaking them, and influencing positive contextual improvement. Political interventions, through policies in this case, could assist.

5.9.2. Implications for practice

Around 66 percent of Deaf people in South Africa are functionally illiterate, around 70 percent of the Deaf population is unemployed, and the general information level of the adult Deaf person is on average equal to that of an eight-year - old hearing child (Statistics SA, 2011). The condition mentioned above is due in large part to the fact that the Deaf teachers are not

sufficiently trained to teach this group of learners and the system of education does not provide adequate access to these learners. (Storbeck, 2010).

In practice, this study has revealed that the currently used CAPS curriculum is not effective in educating D/deaf learners or in helping them pursue aspired careers in white-collar occupations. The study has further discovered that there are progressive plans, action and policies in place in the Department of Education to address the current practices. These strategies include modifying the curriculum into the language accessible for deaf learners and equipping teachers and department staff for effective teaching and support of D/deaf education, all this working towards improving the current situation. These practical strategies have resulted in the Deaf Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (DCAPS). However, the practice of the policies and plans is not evident. This study will raise the awareness of the Education Department, the teachers, the parents and the learners about current practices and their challenges; and hopefully accelerate the implementation of policies and improve current practices. If the current practices improve, the education quality of D/deaf learners will improve, and they will practise their career construction on a more useful and supportive platform.

5.9.3. Implications for Theory

The literature reviewed identifies the knowledge gap concerning career construction and supportive imperatives for deaf high school learners. This study aims to fill this gap in the awareness and knowledge of the challenges faced by deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape.

The theory of career construction has clear concepts and constructs that define the way careers are constructed. These constructs are personal constructivism, social constructivism and contextual constructivism. This study aligns itself with these three theoretical constructs. The study has discovered that in the Eastern Cape Province, the contextual background influences the way D/deaf learners individually construct their careers as well as the way education and parents behave towards constructing their careers and socially supporting them. This study confirms Savickas' theory of career construction. It further confirms the theory in the field of disability studies, career construction and D/deaf education in the Eastern Cape.

The theoretical framework has assisted in interpreting findings and connecting this study to larger, more general ideas than the concrete particulars of this study (Casanave & Li, 2015). The framework gives insight to what the researcher thought was happening with the phenomenon under study (Casanave & Li, 2015).

The current study has brought some theoretical knowledge and practical observations to the fields of career construction, D/deaf education, disability studies and related fields. Although, the knowledge is specific to the Eastern Cape, it opens opportunities of future information generation in any of these fields. The fields covered by the theoretical offerings of this study were generally under-researched. This theoretical information could be a powerful scientific and evidence-based tool to drive positive information generation in these fields. The study did not fully close the information gap. However, it has offered a meaningful contribution to the knowledge gap in this field. This theoretic information may be used for future research, teaching, policy construction and for recommendations to develop platforms for change in this field.

5.9.4. Implications for methodology

A case study design was adopted for this study, because intrinsically, the researcher had no interest in generalising the findings. The focus was to understand the case under study (Simons, 2009).

The study adopted a case study design, which brought an understanding but limited generalisation of the findings. The study has been exposed but may not be generalised nationally or internationally. The methodology has been useful for the purpose of this study, but a different methodological approach might elicit information that could be generalised. This kind of study can be adapted to other methodologies which might suit different contexts. The study was qualitative in nature, which gave more insight to understanding the case.

5.9.5. Implications for future research

New avenues and opportunities for future research have been opened. Comparative studies could be conducted in different contexts and settings to get a broader picture of how D/deaf learners construct careers and how are they supported. Similar studies for other disabilities could be carried out and different methodologies could be attempted.

5.10. The limitations of the study

This study cannot be generalised because it was a case study, which intended to understand and expose a particular case and did not aim at generalising the findings. It was bounded by the context, time and place.

The study focuses on D/deaf learners who were South African Sign Language users; the researcher is not deaf and has depended on the interpretation of Sign Language by interpreters who understood both languages. The data interpreted was not first-hand information and may have lost some important nuances, although measures were taken to verify the interpretations.

Methodologically, focus groups for learners were bigger than expected; this was because of time constraints in data collection imposed by logistical delays emanating from the schools. The availability of interpreters was an additional problem. If focus group numbers had been kept to a minimum possibly the quality of data would be better.

The parents were individually interviewed over the telephone and telephonic interviews are not as in-depth as face-to-face interviews which may have given more insight through observing the behaviours and reactions of the participants.

The research topic was broad and not specific to one field of study as it combined fields of disability studies, D/deaf education and career construction. This might have compromised the depth of information elicited to satisfy these fields. This makes the study more superficial than specific.

Delayed access to data collection sites caused by internal matters of the schools became a limitation as it reduced the time allocated for data collection. As a result, some planned data collection strategies, like observations, could not be used as the allocated data collection period had lapsed. The delays also affected returning to participants to verify and clarify information, as this would be ethically unacceptable.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- Ethics Clearance letter granted by UCT ethics committee.



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
Faculty of Health Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee



Room E53-46 Old Main Building
Groote Schuur Hospital
Observatory 7925
Telephone (021) 414 6526
Email: shuretta.thomas@uct.ac.za
Website: www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/research/humanethics/forms

Appendix 2- Eastern Cape Department of Education Provincial office permission letter



STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES

Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex • Zone 6 • Zwelitsha • Eastern Cape
Private Bag X0032 • Bisho • 5605 • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Tel: +27 (0)40 608 4773/4035/4537 • Fax: +27 (0)40 608 4574 • Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za

Enquiries: B Pamla

Email: babalwa.pamla@ecdoe.gov.za

Date: 22 March 2018

Ms. U Stemela

43 Mnyamanzi Street

Hilcrest Extension

Mthatha

5099

Dear Ms. Stemela

PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A DOCTORATE THESIS: CAREER CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPORT OF D/DEAF HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS IN THE EASTERN CAPE

1. Thank you for your application to conduct research.
2. Your application to conduct the abovementioned research in 2 deaf secondary schools in OR. Tambo and Buffalo City under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:
 - a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;
 - b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;
 - c. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;
 - d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;
 - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time;
 - f. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;

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Page 1 of 2



-
- g. your research will be limited to those institutions for which approval has been granted, should changes be effected written permission must be obtained from the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;
 - h. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis;
 - i. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary;
 - j. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation upon completion of your research;
 - k. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoe document duly completed by you;
 - l. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form);
 - m. you submit on a six monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation.
3. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there not be compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoe.
 4. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.
 5. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Director, Ms. NY Kanjana on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email nelisa.kanjana@ecdoe.gov.za should you need any assistance.

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NY KANJANA

**DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH & SECRETARIAT SERVICES
FOR SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL: EDUCATION**



Appendix 3- Eastern Department of Education Districts office permission



OFFICE OF THE ACTING DISTRICT DIRECTOR

DR WB Rubusana Building, NU 1 Mdantsane, East London, 5200 SOUTH AFRICA Tel: 043 760 0542 Fax :043 760 0545,
Website: www.ecdoe.gov.za ,Email: welekazi.dantile@ecdoe.gov.za Date: 10 April 2018

Ms U. Stemela
43 Mnyamanzi Street
Hilcrest Ext
Mthatha
5099

Dear Ms Stemela

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN BUFFALO CITY DISTRICT

Approval is hereby granted for you, **Ms Stemela** to conduct research in two deaf secondary schools, with the topic ***"Career construction and support of deaf high school learners"***, as part of your study towards the PhD qualification at the University of Cape Town.

This permission is granted provided that you make proper arrangements with the affected schools and to ensure that tuition time is not disrupted.

We wishing you well in your endeavours.

Yours faithfully

Signature removed to avoid exposure online


E.G. KLAASEN

DISTRICT DIRECTOR - BCM

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Ikama eliquambileyo!

Appendix 4- Eastern Cape Department of Education school's permission letters.



Room E53-46 Old Main Building

Groote Schuur Hospital

Observatory 7925

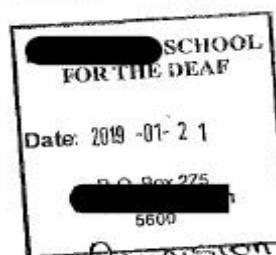
Telephone (021)406 6626

The Principal

[REDACTED] School for the Deaf

Eastern Cape

Sir/Madam



20 April 2018

Signature removed to avoid exposure online

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT [REDACTED] SCHOOL

My name is Unati Stemela, and I am a disability studies student at the University of Cape Town. The research I wish to conduct for my Doctoral thesis involves "career construction and support of Deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province". This project will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Harsha Kathard (UCT, South Africa) and Dr. Maximus Sefotho (UP, South Africa). I am hereby seeking your consent to approach learners, parents and teachers in your school to provide participants for this project.

I have provided you with a copy of my thesis proposal which includes copies of the measure and consent and assent forms to be used in the research process, as well as copies of the approval letter which I received from the UCT Research Ethics Committee (Human), the permission letter from the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of education and from the Buffalo City district office.

Upon completion of the study, I undertake to provide the school with a bound copy of the full research report. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on

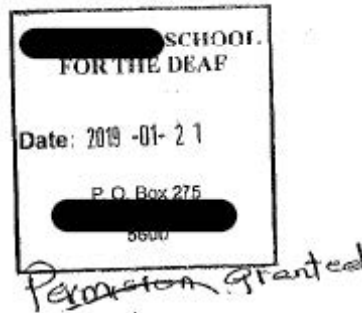
083 419 6690 cell phone number, 086 600 6690 fax and 4stemela@gmail.com email address.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Signature removed to avoid exposure online

Unati Stemela



Signature removed to avoid exposure online

Appendix 5- Request for learner participation in research, consent and assent forms



Room E53-46 Old Main Building

Groote Schuur Hospital

Observatory 7925

Telephone (021) 406 6626

Request for learner participation in research.

Dear Learner.

I am doing a research study on “Career construction and support of deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province” as part of my studies as a PhD candidate at the University of Cape Town. Your principal has given me permission to do this study in your school. I would like to invite you to be a very special part of my study. I am doing this study so that I can understand what you want to become in future and why. As you may notice, most D/deaf people do not become professionals, although they have been to schools for the deaf. I am collecting information to help in understanding why this is so. This information will help the Department of Basic Education, your school, you and many other learners to know how to make future careers.

There is no risk or danger involved in this study; it will not harm you in any way. We will only be talking. To protect your identity and privacy, your name will not appear on the results and answers will not count for any marks at school. I will not share your answers with your teachers or parents. The records of this information will be locked safely in my office.

Participation in this study is voluntary, if you choose not to take part in it; your choice will not disadvantage you in any way. You will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any stage if you are uncomfortable.

In order to do the research, I would like you to take part in a group discussion which will be in your school. I would like you to say as much and be honest as you can. The topic is about how you make and develop your future career and how you are supported to do this. The interviews will be conducted in groups and individually, if necessary. There will be a Sign Language interpreter to help us communicate in your preferred language. There will only be one interview which will take about one hour.

When the study is finished, I shall return to your school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I discovered in my study. You will be invited to come and listen to my talk. I will also write a book on this study and that book will be accessible to you when you want to see or read it.

There may be some words you do not know or understand in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of these words.

If you decide to be part of my study, please sign the form on the next page. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do.

Researcher: U. Stemela



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
Faculty of Health Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee



Room E53-46 Old Main Building
Groote Schuur Hospital
Observatory 7925
Telephone (021) 406 6626

Consent from the learner

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at my school. I have understood the information about this study and I know what I will be asked to do. I am willing to take part in the study.

Learner's name: [REDACTED] Signature: [REDACTED]

Date: 01-06-2018

Witness's name: [REDACTED] Signature: [REDACTED]

Date: 01/06/2018

Researcher's name: U. Stenela Signature: [REDACTED]

Date: 01/06/2018

Signatures removed to avoid exposure online



Room E53-46 Old Main Building

Groote Schuur Hospital

Observatory 7925

Telephone (021) 406 6626

Consent from the learner

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at my school. I have understood the information about this study and I know what I will be asked to do. I am willing to take part in the study.

Learner's name: [REDACTED]

Signature:

Date: 25/01/2019

Witness's name: [REDACTED]

Signature:

Date: 25/01/2019

Signatures removed to avoid exposure online

Researcher's name:

U. Stemela

Signature:

Date: 25/01/2019



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
Faculty of Health Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee



Room E53-46 Old Main Building

Groote Schuur Hospital

Observatory 7925

Telephone (021) 406 6626

Assent from the learner

I have read this letter which asks me to be part of a study at my school. I have understood the information about this study and I know what I will be asked to do. I am willing to take part in the study.

Learner's name: [REDACTED] Signature: [REDACTED] Date: 25/01/19

Witness's name: [REDACTED] Signature: [REDACTED] Date: 25/01/2019

Signatures removed to avoid exposure online

Researcher's name: U. Stenela Signature: [REDACTED] Date: 25/01/2019

Appendix 6- Request for parents to participate in the research and consent forms



Room E53-46 Old Main Building

Groote Schuur Hospital

Observatory 7925

Telephone (021) 406 6626

Request for parent participation in an interview

Dear Parent

This letter is an invitation to participate in a study that I, Unati Stemela, am conducting as part of my research as a doctoral student. It is entitled “Career construction and support of deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province,” at the University of Cape Town. Permission for the study has been given by the Department of Basic Education, the school principal and the Ethics Committee of the University of Cape Town. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic. I am doing this study so that I can understand how learners in D/deaf high schools build their future careers and how they are supported by parents and the education system in building their future careers. As you may notice, most D/deaf people do not become professionals although they have been to schools for the D/deaf. I am collecting information to help in understanding why this is so. This information will help the Department of Basic Education, your child, you and many other learners to know how careers are built and supported in D/deaf schools in the Eastern Cape Province.

There is no risk or danger involved in this study; it will not harm you in any way. We will only be talking. To protect your identity and privacy, your name will not appear on the results. I will not share your answers with the schoolteachers or your child. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. The records of this information will be locked safely in my office.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to take part in it, your choice will not disadvantage you or your child in any way. You will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any stage if you are uncomfortable.

In order to do the research, I would like you to take part in a group or individual interview which will be held at a mutually agreed upon location, at a time convenient to you. The interview is about how you support your D/deaf child in developing his/her future career. You will be allowed to communicate in your preferred language. There will only be one interview which will take about one hour.

When the study is finished, I shall return to the school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I discovered in my study. You will be invited to come and listen to my talk. I will also write a book on this study and that book will be accessible to you when you want to see or read it.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I request you to do.

If you accept my invitation to participate, I request you to sign the consent form on the next page.

I thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours sincerely

Unati Stemela



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
Faculty of Health Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee



Room E53-46 Old Main Building

Groote Schuur Hospital

Observatory 7925

Telephone (021) 406 6626

Consent for parent participation in research

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study: “Career construction and support of deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province.” I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all the foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Parent’s name:

Signature:

Date:

Witness’s name:

Signature:

Date:

Researcher’s name:

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 7- Request for teachers and officials to participate in research and consent forms



Room E53-46 Old Main Building

Groote Schuur Hospital

Observatory 7925

Telephone (021) 406 6626

Request for teacher/official participant in an interview

Sir/Madam

This letter is an invitation to participate in a study that I, Unati Stemela, am conducting as part of my research as a doctoral student. It is entitled, “Career construction and support of deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province,” at the University of Cape Town. Permission for the study has been given by the Department of Basic Education, the school principal and the Ethics Committee of the University of Cape Town. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic. I am doing this study so that I can understand how learners in D/deaf high schools build their future careers and how they are supported by teachers and the education system in building their future careers. As you may notice, most D/deaf people do not become professionals, although they have been to schools for the D/deaf. I am collecting information to help in understanding why this is so. This information will help the Department of Basic Education, your school, you and many other learners to know how careers are built and supported in D/deaf schools in the Eastern Cape Province.

There is no risk or danger involved in this study; it will not harm you in any way. We will only be talking. To protect your identity and privacy, your name will not appear on the results. I will not share your answers with the parents or your learners. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. The records of this information will be locked safely in my office.

Participation in this study is voluntary, if you choose not to take part in it; your choice will not disadvantage you or your learners in any way. You will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any stage if you are uncomfortable.

In order to do the research, I would like you to take part in a group or individual interview which will be held at a mutually agreed upon location, at a time convenient to you. The interview is about how you support your D/deaf learners in constructing their future careers. You will be allowed to communicate in your preferred language. There will only be one interview which will take about one hour.

When the study is finished, I shall return to the school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I discovered in my study. You will be invited to come and listen to my talk. I will also write a book on this study and that book will be accessible to you when you want to see or read it.

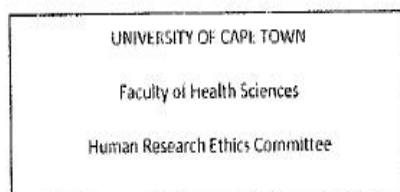
If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I request you to do.

If you accept my invitation to participate, I request you to sign the consent form in the next page.

I thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours sincerely

Unati Stemela



Room E53-46 Old Main Building

Groote Schuur Hospital

Observatory 7925

Telephone (021) 406 6626

Consent for teacher/ official participation in research

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study "Career construction and support of deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province". I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Teacher/ Official's name: [Redacted]

Signature:

Date: 06.06.18

Witness's name: [Redacted]

Signature:

Date: 06.06.2018.

Researcher's name: U. Stemela

Signature removed to avoid exposure online

Signature:

Date: 06.106/2018



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
Faculty of Health Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee



Room E53-46 Old Main Building

Groote Schuur Hospital

Observatory 7925

Telephone (021) 406 6626

Consent for teacher/ official participation in research

I have read the information presented in the information letter about the study "Career construction and support of deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape Province". I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and add any additional details I wanted. I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous. I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Teacher/ Official's name:

[Redacted]

Signature:

Date: 21/01/2019

Witness's name:

[Redacted]

Signature:

Date: 21/01/2019

Researcher's name:

U. Skemela

Signature:

Signatures removed to avoid exposure online

Date: 21/01/2019

Appendix 8- Focus group discussion guide for learners

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the focus group discussion for my research about the career construction and support of Deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape. I want to find out how you, as learners in high school, contribute towards constructing your future careers and how you are supported in this. I am collecting the information to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of disability studies. This information may be used to develop strategies to improve career construction and development of learners. The group discussion should take about 1 hour. The session will be video recorded for later reference and quality assurance. You will not be directly quoted in any report of this study. Only group data will be recorded. Will you still continue with the discussion? **Yes/ No**

General information

Group number : _____

Date : _____

Own Language : _____

Hearing status : _____

School : _____

CAREER ASPIRATIONS

1. What would you like to become in future?
2. Why do you want to follow that career stream?
3. What is necessary to follow that career stream?
4. What skills /attributes/ talents do you have which will help you get there?

CAREER CONSTRUCTION

1. How did you know about the career you want to follow?
2. Have you researched about what that career does in real life?
3. Have you spoken to your parents about what you want to become?
4. Are you receiving support, encouragement or advice about your career aspiration at home?

PERSPECTIVE ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT

1. Do you get time at school to discuss your career dreams?
2. Do you feel the school prepares you enough to reach your career goals?
3. Are you receiving support, encouragement or advice about your career aspiration at school?
4. Do you think you will reach your career dreams?
5. Why?

Thank you for participating in the study, you have now come to the end.

Appendix 9- Interview guide for parents

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my research about the career construction and support of Deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape. I want to find out how the parents at home contribute towards preparing them for future careers. I am collecting the information to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of disability studies. This information may be used to develop strategies to improve preparation of learners. The interview should take about 45 minutes. I will write down your answers and will record the session. You will not be directly quoted in any report of this study. Only group data will be recorded. Will you still continue with the interview? **Yes/No**

PARENTS PERSPECTIVE ON THEIR ROLE IN DEVELOPING THEIR CHILDREN FOR FUTURE CAREERS.

1. When at home do you talk to your children about future related careers? Like about what they might like to become in future? Please tell me more.
2. Do you think your children have the potential to continue with school beyond high school? Why?
3. What are your children's talents and gifts?
4. Do you think these can be developed and contribute to their future careers? How?
5. What role are you contributing to shaping your children's future careers?
6. What role is played by the school to shape the future careers of your children?
7. Do you think the efforts of the school are enough?
8. What more do you think can help your children in realising the careers of their choice?
9. Is there anything that you think as parents you can do to prepare your children for future careers?
10. Can you tell me more about those?
11. Are there any ideas, you would like to share? Or comments or recommendations regarding development of high school learners for future careers?

We have come to the end of the interview, thank you very much for your valuable contributions and time.

Appendix 10- Focus group schedule for teachers

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my research about the career construction and support of Deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape. I want to find out how the school is contributing to developing them for future careers. I am collecting the information to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of disability studies. This information may be used to develop strategies to improve career development of learners. The interview should take about 45 minutes. I will write down your answers and will record the session. You will not be directly quoted in any report of this study. Only group data will be recorded. Will you continue with the interview? **Yes/ No**

CURRICULAR AND EXTRA CURRICULAR METHODS USED BY TEACHERS TO DEVELOP CAREERS OF DEAF HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS

General opening questions

1. Do you think Deaf learners in your school have a chance to develop careers in the formal employment sector (white collar jobs)? Why?
2. Who do you think should contribute to constructing/ developing careers for the Deaf learners?
3. Do you think those people are making a fair contribution?
4. What or who guides the contribution of teachers to develop future careers for Deaf learners?
5. Do you think that guidance is enough? Does it lead to desired results?

Curricular

1. Do you use/ follow any documents or policies to develop and guide career education for your learners?
2. What curricular methods or strategies do you use to develop learners for future careers?
3. What do those curricular methods/ strategies entail?
4. Do you think those curricular methods/strategies are contributing to developing learners for their aspired careers?
5. Can you please share successes that have come with those curricular methods?
6. Can you please share challenges that have come with those methods?

Extracurricular

1. Do you ever use extracurricular activities to develop and guide careers of your learners?
2. What extracurricular methods do you use to develop learners for future careers?
3. What do those methods entail?
4. Do you think those extracurricular methods/strategies contribute to developing learners for their aspired careers?
5. Can you please share successes that have come with those extracurricular methods?
6. Can you please share challenges that have come with those extracurricular methods?
7. Is there anything you would like to share, comment on or recommend with regards to career development of Deaf high school learners?
8. Can you please share with me your view of successes in career development of Deaf learners?
9. Can you please share with me your view of challenges in career development of Deaf learners?
10. What would be your views or suggestions to help improve career construction of Deaf learners and why do you suggest those.

We have come to the end of the interview, thank you very much for your valuable contributions and time.

Appendix 11- Interview guide for officials

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICIALS

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed for my research about the career construction and support of Deaf high school learners in the Eastern Cape. I want to find out how the Department of Education contributes to preparing them for future careers through curriculum and extracurricular activities. I am collecting the information to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of disability studies. This information may be used to develop strategies to improve preparation and support of deaf learners. The interview should take from 30 minutes to 1 hour. I will write down your narrative and will record the session. The recording is only for my use when I am discussing our conversation, it is not for public access. You will not be directly quoted in any report of this study. Only group data will be recorded. Will you still continue with the interview? **Yes/ No**

Interview questions.

1. As a government official in the Department of Education what is your role/function?
2. What documentation guides curricula in high schools?
3. Does the Department have the same or adapted curricula for mainstream and special schools? Particularly deaf school?
4. Do you feel the current curriculum is suitable for the deaf learners?
5. Why do you think so?
6. Has there been a way of evaluating the efficacy of the current curriculum, specifically for deaf learners?
7. What is the role of the Department in supporting careers of deaf learners?
8. Do these strategies work, according to your view? Are they successful?
9. What would be your recommendations regarding the curriculum for deaf learners?
10. Are there any extracurricular activities that the Department uses to encourage career construction of deaf learners?
11. What kind resources and support does the Department give to the deaf schools?
12. Are there any collaborative activities with stake holders to support careers for deaf learners?
13. Are there any future/ strategic plans with regard to education of people living with disabilities?
14. Are any ideas, you would like to share? Or comments or recommendations regarding the development of high school learners for future careers?

We have come to the end of the interview, thank you very much for your valuable contributions and time.

Appendix 12- Graphic works designed and developed for this study.





The Story of Parents

The support of parents for childrens career is important. These parents want to support their children, but they have serious challenges in being able to do so.

How do i communicate with her?
I don't know sign language...
What does she even want to study
towards her career?

He won't pass matric lik
other children..
He won't finish matric he's
old now..
The Deafness will limit
her future..

As long as she is in school, I'm happy.
I just don't know where I'll get money.
Being in villages doesn't help either.
It's difficult for me to support my child how
i want to, because I don't know much
about her situation. I may need to start
saving money for university.



Appendix 13- The certification of the Sign Language interpreter



CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

This is to certify that

[REDACTED]

I.D. Number

[REDACTED]

Attended a Course on

**Liaison South African
Sign Language Interpreting**

From 05 - 09 October 2015

.....09/10/2015.....
Date of Issue

Signature removed to avoid exposure online
.....
Training Director

Appendix 14 - A confirmation letter from the language editor

S E Matthis B A
(Hons)

1 Oden Place
Douglasdale, 2191

Cell: 0837817646

email:suematthis@gmail.com

5 September 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves as confirmation that I have proofread and language edited the dissertation:

**Career construction and support of D/deaf high school learners in the Eastern
Cape Province,**

submitted by Unati Stemela (STMUNA001) in fulfilment of a PhD in Disability Studies.

Signature removed to avoid exposure online

S E Matthis (Mrs)